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# Catalonia and the “Culture of Welcome”

## Grassroots Approaches to Refugee Integration



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2016

**UAB**

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

# **Catalonia and the “Culture of Welcome”: Grassroots Approaches to Refugee Integration**

William Netherland

“But there are promptings of wisdom from the penetralia of human nature, which a people can hear, though the wisest of their practical Statesmen be deaf towards them.”

William Wordsworth (1809, p. 7)

Director: Dan Rodríguez-García

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2016

Cover Image: Benvinguts Refugiats  
Source: Photographed by the Author

## *Acknowledgments*

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# ***1. Introduction***

## **1.1 The Refugee Crisis**

In 2015, no less than 1,000,000 refugees and asylum seekers entered the European Union. (UNHCR, 2016) As of July 2, 2016 an additional 230,000 refugees, asylum seekers and migrants had crossed European borders. (UNHCR, 2016) This wave of immigrants has consisted of individuals fleeing civil war, terrorism, persecution and other forms of violence throughout the global South, primarily the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa, the most influential factor being armed conflict in Syria. (UNHCR, 2015) While Europe has experienced what many have called the worst refugee crisis since the Second World War (Abbott/Huffington Post UK, 2016; BBC, 2016; El País, 2016; La Vanguardia, 2016; Reuters/Newsweek, 2016), forced migrant flows continue in Asia, Latin America and the heart of Europe. At the time of finalizing this report,<sup>1</sup> the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 2016) states that there are an estimated 65.3 million forcibly displaced people (refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons) worldwide.

The governmental responses to the current European crisis have ranged from apathetic to proactive with a myriad of approaches in between. Dependent upon existing regulations and agreements, which at best have proven incapable of handling such an enormous influx and at worst have been completely ignored, European governments have left non-governmental organizations (NGO's), independent volunteers and grassroots groups to address an increasingly desperate humanitarian need. In a May 2016 newsletter, the European Council of Refugees and Exiles highlighted this disparity:

“While many ordinary European citizens showed solidarity and support for refugees, most European leaders responded with fences, walls and razor wire.” (ECRE, 2016)

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<sup>1</sup> July 2, 2016

Divisions have amplified as attempts by the EU to redistribute refugees across Europe on a quota basis have been met with slow responses and, at times, outright refusal. While some countries have taken in more than their expected shares of asylum seekers, the overall European response has fallen far short of its commitment. (European Commission, 2016a)

Meanwhile, immigrants have piled up in camps throughout Europe. Many of these camps are transitory, where those seeking asylum have been trapped by border fences, police or natural boundaries as in Calais and Dunkirk, France or Idomeni, Greece. Most wayfarers have hoped to find accommodation in countries where they expect a warmer welcome and better opportunities. In other cases, even after gaining official asylum status, refugees have been left to survive in centers of mass accommodation, which are often buildings converted from previous uses like an indoor cycling stadium in Vienna, Austria (The Local, 2015) and a federal prison in the Netherlands. (Dutch News, 2016)

To date, the governments of the EU have been unable to find a viable solution as quotas have failed and negotiations stagnated. Writing for a special La Vanguardia dossier in October 2015, Xavier Aragall states:

“Se puede decir que la UE ha priorizado hasta ahora la coordinación por encima de una verdadera puesta en común. Existen normas y procedimientos compartidos que permiten una gestión pragmática de los demandantes de asilo, pero el sistema de asilo no está preparado para una situación de crisis como la actual, que requeriría un sistema completamente comunitarizado con el que no sería precisa la redistribución de personas por cuotas.” (Aragall, 2015, p. 24)

The most acted upon agreement was reached in March 2016 in which the EU and Turkey decided upon a one-for-one swap of migrants who had reached Europe without legitimate asylum claims or were not seeking asylum at all, for Syrian refugees stranded in Turkey en route to Europe. (European Commission, 2016b)

Reacting to agreements such as this, and a perceived ineffectiveness of governmental approaches to the situation overall, NGO's and grassroots organizations across the continent have voiced their unwillingness to wait for a

coordinated response “por encima”, or from the top down, and have taken to the streets of European cities, the beaches of the Mediterranean, the camps and transit centers on the refugee routes and social media platforms to offer their own responses. This ground up response forms the basis of this investigation.



## **1.2 The Culture of Welcome**

The central underlying theme of this investigation has been the role of grassroots organizations in creating what has been called the “Culture of Welcome” throughout Europe. Their self-proclaimed goal has been to establish a “culture” or atmosphere of understanding and acceptance whereby individuals fleeing war and persecution are not forced to live in camps nor sent back to conditions of danger or indignity. Led by various types of organizations, the “Culture of Welcome” has evolved into a social movement whose goals include the continued recognition of Europe as a location which embraces diversity and respects human rights.

The “Culture of Welcome” itself is not my own term. It is a term that has been used by various grassroots organizations as well as NGO’s, the press and other actors involved in the crisis. I feel that a study of this movement as a whole would be beneficial to the overall understanding of refugee integration as well as other changes currently occurring in the global refugee regime. However, based on the scope of my investigation, I have sought to understand the role of individual organizations amidst this movement rather than explain the movement itself. (Gibb, 2001)

It is important to acknowledge that there are many actors involved in the creation of this welcoming environment. These include government entities and politicians, NGO’s, other non-profit and community organizations, individuals from every sector of society and even migrants themselves. I do not wish to detract from the importance of the efforts of all involved, but, due to limited resources, I have elected to focus on one specific piece of an immeasurably complex whole.

This investigation has examined a branch of the “Culture of Welcome” as it has been created in the autonomous Spanish region of Catalonia. Based primarily in Barcelona, one of the primary goals has been to offer a detailed description of the grassroots organizations working for refugees including their

organizational structure, actions and goals, and the factors which have motivated the involvement of their individual members. In observing the “Culture of Welcome” as it has formed, my focus has been drawn to the ideas of welcome, acceptance and integration which have formed much of the rhetoric among these groups. As a result, the principle question of investigation has been, “How are grassroots organizations in Catalonia approaching the question of refugee integration?” In the following section I will further outline the formulation of this question. Having taken form amidst a crisis of refugees and asylum seekers, I have also questioned the ways in which these groups differentiate between refugees and other types of immigrants.

The organizations themselves are considered grassroots by nature of having no ties with governmental agencies or NGO’s. While not dependent on the formal structures, organizational control or financial aid of the two previously mentioned sectors, these groups do not exist in isolation and often work together with other organizations at both governmental and non-governmental levels. Working from the ground up, led by individual citizens and fueled by volunteerism, grassroots groups often arise in direct response to government’s inability to represent the needs of every faction of civil society. Such groups frequently arise to give voice to their own needs. (Baltiwala, 2002) In the current case, however, the organizations at work in Catalonia, and across Europe, have arisen not in self-defense but in defense of the forcibly displaced.

Image 1: Refugiados Bienvenidos



Source: Facebook/Refugiados Bienvenidos

### 1.3 Background

I first began working with refugees as an integration mentor for the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in Dallas, Texas. My role was to assist the members of a refugee family from the Rakhine state of Myanmar navigate their new surroundings. As a native of Dallas I was able to teach them basic elements of day-to-day life through weekly interaction. In the six months we spent together, I found that the more I learned of their culture and the daily life which they had left behind in Myanmar, the more open our dialogue became and the more eager they were to learn new norms and patterns of life. This experience brought to light the complexity of integration. Each actor involved defined and approached the concept differently while exemplifying different levels of integration through varying means. I was also struck by the two-way nature of the process, the dynamic fluidity with which individual identities were negotiated, defined and defended, and the absence of a concrete end mark by which to judge their successful integration.<sup>2</sup>

To pursue this theme further, I undertook a master's program in Anthropology: Advanced Research and Social Intervention at the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB) beginning in September 2015. This report is the result of an investigation carried out for the fulfillment of that program. The timing of this undertaking coincided with an intense period of media coverage, grassroots organizing and political discussion related to the refugee crisis. The overall response at this time was profoundly influenced by the image of a Syrian toddler named Aylan Kurdi who drowned while crossing the Aegean Sea from Turkey seeking asylum. (Mourenza, 2015)

The decision to focus on grassroots organizations in Catalonia and their role in developing the “Culture of Welcome” was the direct result of time spent

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<sup>2</sup> I am using the term integration here in the way it was used by the IRC, as a relationship-based process whereby refugees as individuals and families develop independence and the ability to confidently navigate systems and situations encountered in daily life in their new environment. (IRC, 2016) I will develop the term itself in further detail in the theoretical section on integration.

in the field after arriving in Europe. Looking for ways to be of assistance, I soon came across several grassroots groups working in various capacities here in Barcelona and in numerous sites throughout Europe. What initially called my attention to these groups was their responsiveness to my own inquiries regarding short-term volunteer assistance. Having contacted NGO's like the Red Cross, UNHCR/ACNUR<sup>3</sup> and others, I received responses looking for longer periods of involvement which I was unable to offer. The ease of communication conducted with grassroots organizations, primarily through Facebook, allowed me to easily connect with groups at work in Barcelona, Vienna, Austria and Idomeni, Greece. Through these contacts, I was able to begin working with two organizations in Barcelona who focused on sending donations to refugee camps throughout Europe and acquiring housing for refugees who would arrive in Spain, respectively. I also traveled to Vienna and Idomeni with my wife where we worked in various camps as volunteers in December 2015.

Working in these situations, I began developing specific questions regarding the role of grassroots organizations in refugee assistance and integration. What niche do they fill? What do they offer that is unique to what established NGO's in the same field are already providing? What drives the individuals in these groups to do what they do? Overall, I wanted to know how, or indeed if, these organizations could help improve the process through which forced migrants must go when establishing a new life amidst unfamiliar surroundings.

Rita Ruff Lopes, Founder of RefugeesAidBCN: "But they always live their lives, like, in the ghettos, segregated. So... we need integration, I think."

While interacting with these groups, I observed many individuals voice their belief that for Europe to fulfill its responsibility to those seeking asylum and refuge, separation and marginalization must be avoided, while integration

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<sup>3</sup> El Alto Comisionado de las Naciones Unidas para los Refugiados - The Spanish branch of the UNHCR.

embraced. Thus, I chose to center my investigation on the grassroots ideas and approaches to that integration. Further questions followed. How do they define integration? What role do they see themselves playing in that process? Is this something they feel should only apply to refugees and asylum seekers or to immigrants in general? Additionally, I wanted to know what cultural elements the individuals which make up these groups expected refugees to “shed” and what roles they expected them to take on. (Berry, 1997; Kortmann, 2015) Finally, I wanted to know if these expectations aligned with those of the refugees and asylum seekers in question.

## 1.4 Timeline

To conclude this introduction, I would like to offer a perspective of events related to the current crisis and highlight factors of special significance to the Spanish response. The following timeline was created by following reports from various sources regarding the refugee crisis. I monitored these sources by subscribing to pertinent newsletters, creating Google News alerts and staying as up-to-date as possible on developments through other online sources, as well as communication with various individuals active in the field. Commonly recurring sources included the European Council of Refugees and Exiles, the Comisi n Espa ola de Ayuda al Refugiado/Comiss o Catalana d'Ajuda al Refugiat, Catalan News Agency, El Pa s and La Vanguardia.

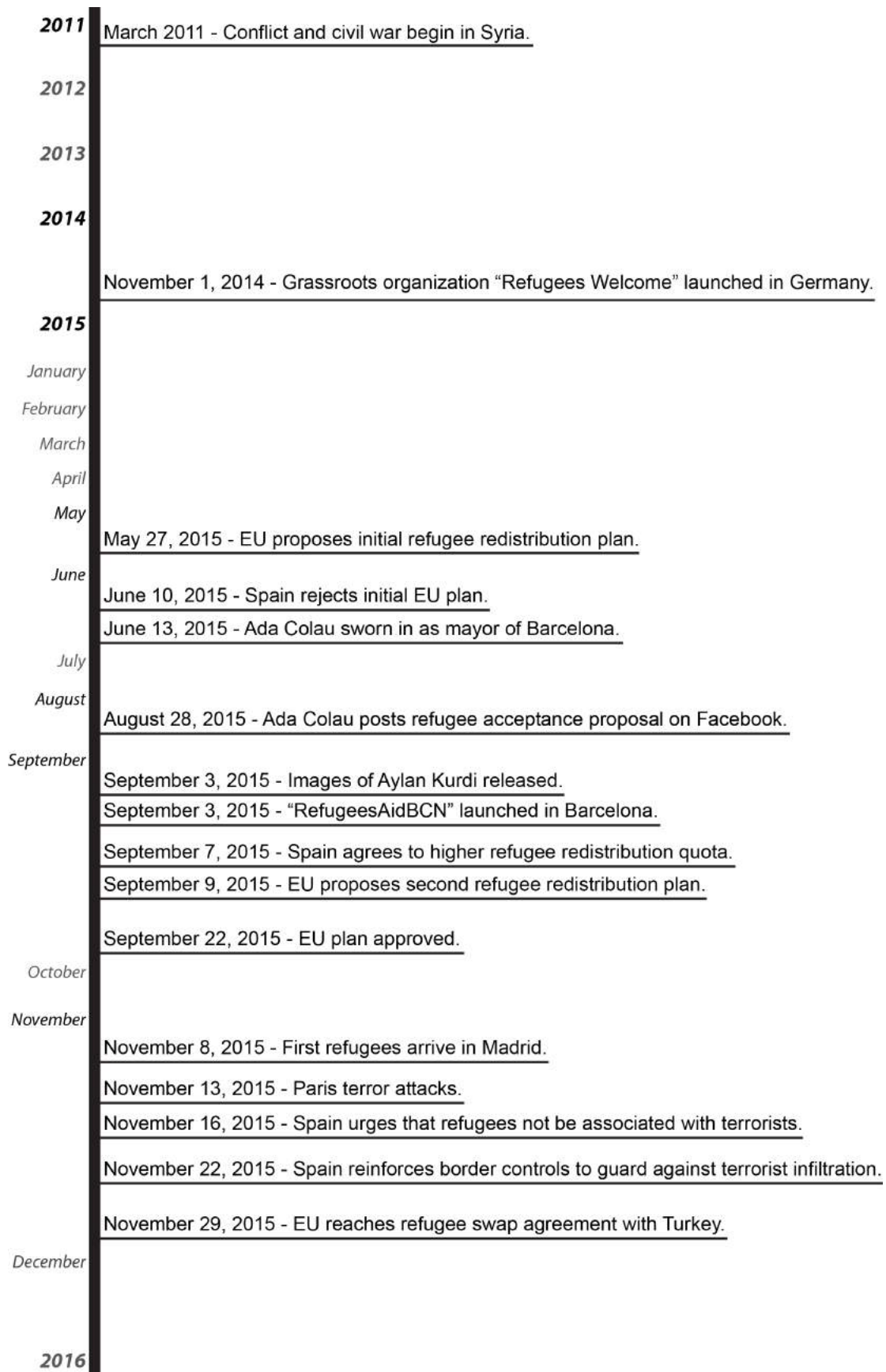
Amidst negotiations between the EU member states to establish a redistribution plan for asylum seekers already in Europe, the Spanish government agreed to raise its acceptance quota by 14,931 individuals. (Neumann, 2015) This brought Spain's total number of potential refugee placements to 17,410. (Jim nez G lvez, 2015) This change was prompted by the circulated images of Aylan Kurdi, pressure from local governments (including the city council of Barcelona under the leadership of mayor Ada Colau) and the insistence of NGO's and citizen-led grassroots movements. (Hedgecoe, 2015) Moving toward this goal, eleven Eritrean refugees and one Syrian were relocated to Spain from Italy on November 9, 2015. (Bengoa & Ortega Dolz, 2015)

The key element to bear in mind while reading this report is that, in spite of the best intentions and promises, while conducting this investigation, Spain had yet to receive more than twelve refugees as part of its grand commitment.<sup>4</sup> This fact has served as motivation for the rise of several grassroots organizations in Catalonia and influenced their means of involvement and approaches to refugee integration.

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<sup>4</sup> Since concluding this investigation and while writing this report, that number has increased to over 100 individuals, still far short of the agreed upon quota. (Spanish News Today, 2016)

Figure 1: Refugee Crisis Timeline



Source: Created by the Author

## ***2. Objectives and Methodology***

### **2.1 Objectives**

The primary goal of this investigation has been to examine the ways in which grassroots organizations in Catalonia operate on a daily basis and gain insight into their approaches to refugee integration. I also set out to describe relevant factors which have influenced those approaches and motivated individual involvement as well as determine whether or not those principles apply to non-refugee migrants as well. Lastly, I wanted to find out if the plans and approaches of these groups align with the needs and expectations of the refugees and asylum seekers they hope to serve. This final element, while forming a minimal part of the final result for reasons which will be described in this section, acted as a guide for ensuring the value of the investigation itself.

My intention has been to undertake research which, in some small way, can contribute to the cause of the forcibly displaced. Guided by the principles of Applied or Oriented Anthropology (Díaz, 1998; San Román, 2006), I have sought to add to the field of anthropological study a work which is theoretically sound and expressly relevant. Offering an alternative nomenclature, Setha Low uses the term Engaged Anthropology and offers a definition which has resounded with me throughout the investigative process:

“I define engaged anthropology as those activities that grow out of a commitment to the informants and communities with whom anthropologists work and a values-based stance that anthropological research respect the dignity and rights of all people and have a beneficent effect on the promotion of social justice.” (Low, 2011, pp. 390-391)

Before describing the style and methods of investigation and analysis, I would like to clarify my position regarding the organizations in question. I entered into participation with each group as a volunteer and collaborator as well as an investigator. I immediately made known to each individual with whom I



worked that I was observing and investigating their actions. Based upon this initial openness and a shared end goal, an atmosphere of honesty and trust was quickly established. Throughout the investigation, every possible step was taken to ensure my own objectivity. At the same time, I acknowledge that my goals and those of the subjects are related and that that fact has fluidly and flexibly influenced the investigation itself. This influence has been taken into critical consideration at every turn and, indeed, has proven to be one of the chief challenges. As the investigation developed, my approach took on many characteristics of what can also be described as Collaborative Anthropology as expounded upon by Joanne Rappaport and others.<sup>5</sup> (2008) Drawing from the same sources, Arribas Lozano offers a summary of Collaborative Anthropology among social movements which I believe justifies the challenges and demonstrates the richness of my own investigation:

“Pensar junto y con las personas que están dando cuerpo a esos nuevos protagonismos sociales es la mejor manera posible de alcanzar una comprensión más rica de estos fenómenos. Si nuestras propuestas están integradas dentro de las dinámicas internas de los movimientos, eso nos permitirá participar en situaciones de discusión y análisis colectivo que multiplicarán la riqueza y la complejidad de nuestras investigaciones.” (Arribas Lozano, 2014, pp. 8-9)

While working to maintain objectivity, I also sought the input of the subjects themselves. In this way I was able to create a truly ethnographic account of the organizations under observation from within as well as a work which would contribute to both the field of Anthropology and the movement itself. The goal of both the movement and my work is to ensure the best possible treatment of refugees, regardless of origin or destination. The labor undertaken here has been for them. I believe the individuals who are working to establish the “Culture of Welcome” here in Catalonia also merit the support of such a work to better their approaches, make known their presence and demonstrate their actions and intentions. This work is also for them.

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<sup>5</sup> See, for example, the journal, *Collaborative Anthropologies*: <http://muse.jhu.edu/journal/471>.

## 2.2 Methodology

### 2.2.1 *The Field of Investigation*

Field Notes: “My observation of the ‘Culture of Welcome’ in Catalonia truly began at the moment I and my wife decided to move to Barcelona. From researching and applying for school online to fulfilling the visa requirements to obtaining our residency permits, I have been actively observing the welcoming nature of this place and this people. The first night we arrived, we disembarked from a bus in Plaça Espanya and were quickly asked, in English, where we were trying to go. The woman who had asked us gave us directions to our destination and left us with the words, ‘Welcome to Barcelona!’”

Limiting the focus of this investigation was initially difficult. Similarly, restricting the study subjects, sample size and calendar to manageable dimensions at first proved challenging. While this delimitation did take place, it is worth pointing out that my ethnographic experience truly began upon first arriving in Barcelona. As Wolcott points out, simply encountering a new setting, observing new behaviors and being faced with the challenge of adapting oneself to a new environment can awaken the ethnographer in any of us. (Wolcott, 1987, p. 6) As an immigrant to Barcelona for educational purposes, I experienced first-hand the difficulties of navigating complicated bureaucratic requirements, learning not only one, but two new languages and identifying with a new environment. While pursuing my own evolving acculturation strategies, I maintained the desire to begin working in a concrete way to aid the refugees I had come to study and assist. To that end, I began my work as a volunteer as described in the introduction.

Before leaving for Vienna, I contacted the director of a grassroots organization in Barcelona called “RefugeesAidBCN”. The primary function of this group at the time was to send donated materials to camps throughout Europe. Having mentioned that I would be traveling to Vienna, I was invited to her flat to fill a spare backpack with donations. I accepted and was welcomed into her home

where she, her husband and their daughter had been accumulating donations since September. I immediately introduced to them my work and research interests and asked if they would be willing to form part of my investigation. They welcomed my interest, encouraging me to ask them anything and to remain in contact for further investigation. The date was December 3, 2015.

Image 2: Donations



Source: Photographed by Rita Rueff Lopes

### ***2.2.2 Subjects and Units of Analysis***

RefugeesAidBCN has since served as the primary subject of this investigation. A second grassroots organization, founded in Germany and with

branches throughout Europe, including Barcelona, has provided a source of secondary information and comparative observation. Both groups have been analyzed as entire units through participant observation and examination of publicly available social media posts and webpages. The individuals within each group have also been under consideration as subjects of investigation. Analysis at the individual level has been conducted through further ethnographic field work and transcribed interviews with key actors. The investigation has taken place within a wide context involving countless possible subjects. While unable to observe every actor involved, the samples selected seek to provide an accurate approximation.

### ***2.2.3 Style and Methods of Investigation***

The investigation has been primarily exploratory in nature. Focus has been given to description of the organizations under observation and their approaches to integration. In seeking to understand the motivating factors which have led to individual involvement among these groups and influenced their approaches to integration, explicative elements have also been included. In the ethnographic description to follow, I will detail two hypotheses with which I began the investigation. While these hypotheses helped me to formulate interview questions and direct my observations, proving or disproving them was not one of my initial goals. Therefore, I will not spend time explaining them here.

Using a longitudinal timeframe, the work was restricted by physical presence within the field. Understanding that the investigation took place within a changing environment amidst an ongoing crisis, work began *in medias res* and ended long before any actual conclusions to the situation itself were reached. The importance of this investigation lies in this ethnographic approach. As Arribas Lozano points out regarding the anthropological study of social movements:

“Ethnographic fieldwork enables us to apprehend emerging dynamics as they are being built and deployed.” (Arribas Lozano, 2014, p. 1)

The perspective I have gained through this investigation is due in large part to participant observation among both organizations. My role in both has been as a volunteer. As such, I have taken part in the daily actions of both organizations, assisting with donation inventory, organization of demonstrations and presentations, and execution of various other events. I have attended administrative meetings and been included in inter-organizational communication. Fulfilling the role of a volunteer has allowed me to experience the inner workings of both groups.

As mentioned previously, I made known my object as an observer at the very start of my involvement. (See section 2.1 Objectives.) In doing so, I received spoken and, at times, written permission to make observations, take notes and record entire meetings for analysis. While attending the first open-to-the-public volunteer meeting of RefugeesAidBCN, one of the co-directors addressed me by saying:

“You’re the anthropologist, right?”

I appreciated this comment as it highlighted the fact that my efforts were welcome and that there were no false pretenses regarding my role.

To observe online manifestations, I followed each group on Facebook and Twitter. I also examined their respective webpages and received updates through virtual mailing lists. The only materials used from online sources have been publicly accessible. Some analysis was done of the comments made by individuals on each group’s Facebook page in order to develop general observations about the types of questions asked or feedback posted.

Considering December 3, 2015, as the initial start date, I “officially” conducted participant observation through May 4, 2016. On this date, RefugeesAidBCN held its first public conference marking a change in its focus and allowing me to witness the completion of a full “phase” of action, to use the words of one of its directors. Just as the official start date was preceded by day-

to-day experiences within the investigative context, participation and observation have continued after the official end date as well. The dates themselves, while somewhat arbitrary, allowed me to establish a timeframe in which to collect data while ensuring the time necessary to analyze and redact that data before presenting it in its final form.

#### ***2.2.4 Interviews, Field Notes and Analysis***

In addition to participant observation, I conducted in-depth interviews with members of each organization. Interviews were semi-structured and consisted of questions related to each individual's experiences with the organization in question, their reasons for wanting to work with refugees, past volunteer experience, what they felt separated the grassroots organizations from NGO's in the same field, their thoughts on the integration of refugees and immigrants, distinctions made between the two and their own experiences of integration. My original interview guide consisted of thirty questions. After conducting the first interview, I realized that I could reduce the number of questions and obtain the same level of detail through prompting and a more open-ended approach. For the remaining interviews I used a total of ten specific questions which I memorized, allowing for a more conversational-style process. The duration of each interview was approximately forty-five minutes. I obtained signed permission from each interviewee to conduct and record the interview and use the results in both the analysis and final report.

Six interviews were conducted. The interviewees consisted of five women and one man which, as will be seen in the ensuing description, was based on the demographics of the organizations themselves. The option was given to each interviewee to discuss his or her thoughts in Spanish or English. As the English speaking capabilities of each interviewee were greater than my Spanish speaking ability, each interview was conducted in English.

I received written permission from all but one of the interviewees to utilize their real names. Additionally, I was given permission by the founder of RefugeesAidBCN to use the organization's title in this work, but did not have access to members of the second organization with the authority to grant similar permission. As a result, I will only be referring to one of the organizations by name in the following depiction.

Throughout fieldwork, detailed notes were kept in a field journal which included sketches of spaces used, events and settings related to each interview and narration of my own experiences adapting to life in Barcelona. Every interview was transcribed immediately after taking place. Recorded meetings were listened to repeatedly to gather as many detailed notes as possible. All information was then analyzed using RQDA qualitative data analysis software. Both the data and analysis were qualitative in nature, as are the final results. I have applied a combination of grounded theory and inductive reasoning to capture themes which have arisen from the data and highlight others specifically related to integration, refugee and immigrant differentiation and perceived grassroots and NGO distinctions. (Bernard, 2006) These themes were then coded and categorized based on the initial questions of investigation. For ease of management and redaction, the final coding and categorization consisted of a four-tier system in which each category was narrowed down to a specific code which could then be tied directly to concrete data. A total of seven general categories resulted with between two and four subcategories each. Each subcategory was further broken down into several headings which consisted of two to seven specific codes. This information was then arranged to create an outline for the following description.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> See an example of the final coding in the Appendix, Figure 5.

## 2.3 Interviewee Profiles

**Rita Rueff Lopes** - Founder/Director: RefugeesAidBCN

Female

Age: 31

Nationality: Portuguese

Time in Catalonia: 3 Years

Profession: Psychologist

**Christelle** - Co-director: RefugeesAidBCN

Female

Age: 36

Nationality: French

Time in Catalonia: 12 Years

Profession: Event Coordinator

**RefugeesAidBCN Volunteer**

Female

Age: 33

Nationality: Belgian

Time in Catalonia: 4 Years

Profession: Social Worker

**Mireia** - Volunteer: RefugeesAidBCN

Female

Age: 30

Nationality: Spanish/Catalan

Time in Catalonia: 30 Years

Profession: Architect

**Anna** - Volunteer: RefugeesAidBCN

Female

Age: 39

Nationality: Italian

Time in Catalonia: 6 Years

Profession: Biologist

**Ricardo** - De Facto Leader: Secondary Organization

Male

Age: 33

Nationality: Spanish

Time in Catalonia: 2 Years

Profession: Project Manager



## **2.4 Challenges, Limitations and Solutions**

The chief challenge of this investigation has been the lack of access to refugees and asylum seekers with whom to conduct interviews for the sake of comparing their expectations to the approaches of the organizations in question. I have overcome this challenge in three ways. The first was to conduct non-structured interviews with refugees in Austria and Greece. Because the crisis and the responses to it are not restricted to a single locale, I took advantage of working in refugee camps, prior to the “official” start of my investigation, to explore the situation’s multilocality. Borrowing from Marcus (1995), I used these opportunities to pose questions regarding the systems which have been forming across various settings to construct a multi-sited ethnographic depiction. Secondly, as the sheer complexity of each organization became evident, I conceded the fact that this comparison did not have to form as large a part of this investigation as the description of the groups themselves.

Finally, I was able to obtain a unique perspective regarding the refugee crisis and its relationship to the conflict in Syria. Through a fellow student, I received the contact information of a Syrian gentleman who immigrated to Spain several years ago and currently has family attempting to leave Syria. I conducted an interview with this individual which provided valuable insight regarding factors prioritized by the Syrian immigrant community. Additionally, through the mediation of RefugeesAidBCN, I came into contact with the founder and director of an association representing Syrian immigrants in Catalonia. This association works to raise awareness of the situation in Syria and assist new immigrants and, by extension, refugees, integrate into Catalan society. In many ways, the perspectives of this individual mirrored those of the first. Through these contacts, I gained insight into the expectations of the refugees and immigrants which grassroots organizations in Catalonia are striving to fulfill.

Based on the limited number of refugees arriving in Spain, I was also faced with the challenge of actually seeing grassroots approaches to integration

in practice. This provided me with a unique vantage point. As several of the interviewees had never worked with refugees previously, I have been able to witness the ideals of integration maintained by those individuals apart from first-hand experience. While this could be viewed as a limitation, I believe it provides an excellent point of departure for comparing the ideal of integration to its implementation. From this perspective we can see the ways in which integration has been defined and is currently perceived by the subjects based not on practice, but on personal integration experiences, political perspectives, relational ties and cultural expectations.

### ***3. Theoretical Framework***

#### **3.1 Integration**

The focus of this investigation has been to examine, describe and understand the grassroots approach to integration in Catalonia. We must, therefore, ask what is meant by the term, integration. I have adopted the term in this work as a result of its use among the subjects themselves. I then set out to determine how it is used and understood by those individuals. In this way, my research falls in with studies cited by Kortmann:

“...that do not take the term of ‘integration’ as self-evident but problematise the concept by revealing the way it is used by different actors for different reasons.” (Kortmann, 2015, p. 1058)

To better understand its initial use, the title of this investigation could be rewritten as, “Catalonia and the ‘Culture of Welcome’: Grassroots Approaches to Refugee Inclusion in Society.” This broad understanding of integration as the process by which refugees become a part of society provides a point of departure for understanding the approaches taken by grassroots organizations. Starting here, I was able to use the concept of integration as a “kind of umbrella term” (Castles et al., 2002, p. 104) which could then be further delimited and defined. This delimitation has allowed me to explore the ways in which individual grassroots members conceptualize integration as a process and end goal as well as clarify their use of the term itself.

To understand its conceptualization and use among grassroots groups, I have undertaken a comprehensive study of the term in current academic literature. The grassroots conceptualizations revealed through ethnographic investigation could then be compared to existing interpretations. This allows us to determine whether the ideas of social inclusion maintained by these groups align more closely to those of integration, assimilation, acculturation, etc., as

defined by various authors in various fields. In addition to Anthropology I have studied the concept of integration as developed in the fields of Sociology, Cross-cultural Psychology, Political Science and Refugee Studies.

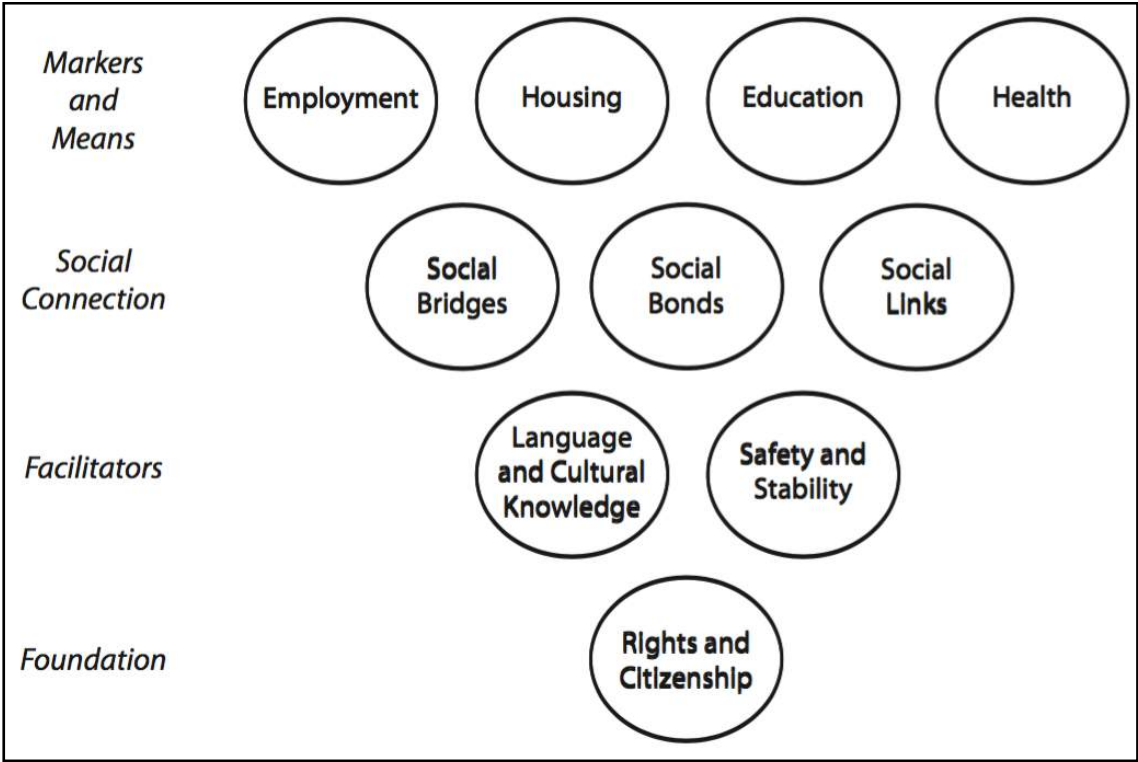
I have relied most heavily on Berry's (1997) definition of integration as one of four possible acculturating strategies by which members of an immigrant population seek to maintain their cultural heritage and practices while actively pursuing interaction with the host society. The ability of the non-dominant group to retain cultural identity throughout the process of adaptation distinguishes integration from assimilation which requires the "shedding" of one's own cultural practices in order to take on the cultural expectations of the dominant society. Integration also emphasizes interaction with members of the host society, distinguishing it from separation and marginalization which seek to distance the two cultures and avoid mixing among their members.

Acculturation is defined as the changes which occur during the long-term interaction of individuals from different cultural backgrounds. (Redfield, Linton & Herskovits, 1936) Efforts made by groups and individuals to pursue a given strategy and adjust to a new environment are termed, adaptation. As individuals adapt to a foreign situation, the strategies of acculturation which they pursue are most often determined by factors among the host or dominant society such as governmental policies and processes and societal attitudes of acceptance. (Berry, 1997)

Integration and acculturation occur at various levels and in stages. Structural integration refers to the ability to access institutionalized functions such as education, health care and employment. This access is usually determined by legal and political policies and structures. Sociocultural integration stems from societal factors such as a willingness to accept newcomers into existing patterns of daily life. The ability to pursue social integration is often dependent on the establishment of structural factors in advance. (Berry, 1997; Berry, 2005: Gordon, 1964) Acculturation occurs culturally among groups and

psychologically for individuals. (Berry, 1997; Phillimore, 2011) Ager & Strang (2008) have developed a framework by which to measure each set of factors and divided them into markers and means, social connection, facilitators and foundational elements. This framework has been used to measure various integration policies and strategies and has proven useful for evaluating grassroots approaches as well.

Figure 2: A Conceptual Framework Defining Core Domains of Integration Markers



Source: Ager & Strang, 2008, p. 170

While different authors have focused on different elements, breaking each concept further down into measurable and unmeasurable qualities (see for example Bloch, 2008 and Boese, 2015 regarding refugee employment, Witteborn, 2011 and Lyytinen, 2015 on housing or Masso, 2009 and Abraham, 2014 on attitudes, willingness and cultural expectations), most agree that successful overall integration is dependent on the establishment of every factor.

Of equal importance to the concept of integration is the mutual accommodation of all concerned. This means that the cultural maintenance of

both the dominant and non-dominant societies carries equal weight. While the attitudes and systems of the host society are paramount for the facilitation of integration, the willingness of the adapting entity to take on certain responsibilities as defined by the host society is also crucial. This highlights the bidirectional nature of integration and the mutual respect and concessions required of all involved. (Berry, 1997; Rodríguez-García, 2010, 2015; Sharaby, 2015)

### **3.2 Interculturalism**

Historically, politically, culturally and practically, integration is best understood within a given context. (Platts-Fowler, 2015) Political structures and policies for managing immigration, fostering or deterring integration and encouraging or stifling diversity can affect the attitudes of a society toward immigrants and refugees. (Zapata-Barrero, 2009) At the same time, the political approach of a country to integration may not be reflected in societal attitudes and actions. (Alba & Foner, 2014) Overall, successful integration based on social cohesion and ethnic diversity is dependent on a pluralistic atmosphere which respects the rights of all and prizes multiculturalism. (Berry, 1997, 2005)

The context of this investigation is two-fold. The current Spanish context has already been introduced. (See section 1.4 Timeline.) The actions taken by the Spanish government have been marked by sluggishness and a perceived unwillingness to take additional steps toward welcoming refugees. However, the historical context of Spain, marked by increased levels of immigration throughout the last half of the previous century has led to a multicultural and diverse society marked by an overall public willingness to receive newcomers. (Abraham, 2014; Masso, 2009; Ortega Pérez, 2003; Zapata Barrero, 2010) Reiterating this point, a recent survey by Amnesty International (2016) ranked Spain as the 6th most welcoming country among 27 worldwide, while 82% of respondents believed that the Spanish government should be doing more to aid refugees.

The second contextual level to consider is that of Catalonia itself. Historically, Catalonia has been even further inundated by immigrants than the rest of Spain and is, today, marked by extremely high levels of diversity and pluralistic approaches to manage that diversity. (Rodríguez-García, 2004, 2012; Zapata-Barrero, 2010) The structures employed by Catalonia and exemplified in its capital city of Barcelona are marked by a concept termed interculturalism through which diversity is proactively encouraged and integration

institutionalized. (Rodríguez-García, 2012; Zapata-Barrero, 2014)

Interculturalism can be viewed as the pursuit of integration at a political level.

The goal of intercultural policies is the creation of a cohesive yet diverse society in which the representatives of various cultures work together to build a

pluralistic common identity. (Rodríguez-García, 2010) As a member of the

Council of Europe's Intercultural Cities Programme, Barcelona has been

described as a leading example of intercultural policies and practices.

(Intercultural Cities, 2016) This was highlighted in the program's 2011

Intercultural Cities Index:

“Barcelona does better than most other cities in the sample. Its leading practices can provide useful insights and examples to other cities in the field of: commitment, education, neighbourhood, cultural and civil life, language, media, international outlook, intelligence competence and welcoming practices.” (p. 12)

The interculturalism of Catalonia and Barcelona have been further exemplified throughout the current crisis. Often contrasted to the efforts of the federal government, Barcelona has established itself as a “Ciutat Refugi” or city of refuge and has influenced other Spanish municipalities to pressure the central government to further action. Efforts like the “Ciutat Refugi” initiative have been incited and supported by mayor Ada Colau, specialized governmental agencies, NGO's and, of course, grassroots organizations. (Barcelona Ciutat Refugi, 2015; Mount, 2015)



Image 3: Ada Colau



The author and Ada Colau, mayor of Barcelona, at the European march for refugees' rights. Barcelona. February 27, 2016.

Source: Photographed by Brielle Netherland

### **3.3 The Refugee Question**

A key question throughout this investigation has been, “How do the individual members of grassroots organizations in Catalonia differentiate between refugees and other types of immigrants?” This question is related to that of integration. Regarding context, one must ask, “Integration into what?” (Castles et al., 2002, p. 118) Regarding differentiation, one must ask, “Integration of whom?” Policies, societal attitudes and other aspects of refugee integration are all dependent upon defining who is and who is not a refugee. Posing this question to those involved allows us to critique the conceptualization of refugees and determine whether the expectations for integration ascribed to one type of immigrant are or can be ascribed to others. (Castles et al., 2002)

Based on the experiences of the Second World War, the most widely accepted definition of a refugee is that laid down by the United Nations in 1951. As accepted by Spain, the regulation grants refugee status to those who, “owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to avail the protection of that country, or who not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.” (TORRE, 2009) This definition has allowed for a general understanding of who, politically and legally, may seek refuge in Spain (and other UN member states).

From a conceptual perspective, further questions must be raised in order to understand the sociocultural perception of refugees and their effects on integration. These questions must take into account contextual understandings of forced displacement. For example, one must consider what factors are considered dangerous enough to force an individual to leave his or her country of origin. Changes within receiving nations such as urbanization and increased diversity must also be considered. Additionally, the role of varying political and public

entities in establishing these definitions should be critically examined. (Milner, 2014; Miller, 2014; Scherschel, 2011; UNHCR, 2009) Other defining factors include the tendency to associate refugees and asylum seekers with clandestine or illegal migration. (Gerard & Pickering, 2013) Economic immigrants are often differentiated from refugees as well and held to differing standards of integration. (Castles et. al, 2002) These distinctions should be questioned to understand the structural and sociocultural factors which influence approaches to integration and attitudes of acceptance.

In short, the question of how refugees and asylum seekers are perceived is relevant and vital to any study of refugee assistance and integration. (Chatty & Marfleet, 2013) As the variation of immigrant profiles amidst migratory flows has increased, questioning the conceptualization of those differing profiles is key to understanding the political measures taken with regard to securitization and acceptance as well as societal attitudes present among immigrant and refugee receiving countries. (Arango, 2003; Fassin, 2011; Zetter, 2007)

In studying a movement calling itself the “Culture of Welcome”, I have sought to examine whether or not this welcome is restricted to refugees only. In making distinctions between immigrant types, are expectations for reception and integration changed? In examining these questions, we can bring to light assumptions regarding belonging, forced displacement, identity and responsibility which form the foundation upon which the “Culture of Welcome” is being built.

## ***4. Fieldwork***

### **4.1 From the Ground Up**

#### ***4.1.1 Daily Operations and Logistics***

Rita: “We have no ties whatsoever with governments or with... in a way it makes us very free. And we like it a lot.”

The first thing to know about the grassroots organizations which form the basis of this study is that they are independent. Autonomy is key to their operations and structure. Ricardo, de facto leader of the second organization under observation, described the advantage of this autonomous character, saying:

“That’s one of the main strengths of grassroots and a very few number of NGO’s: independence from political or economic powers.”

While advantageous, this independence can also be challenging. I will revisit the challenges of independence throughout this section, but would like to begin by highlighting this cornerstone element of the grassroots movement.

RefugeesAidBCN was started in a living room. It’s founder, Rita Rueff Lopes, initially reached out to several NGO’s operating in Catalonia to find ways in which she could be of help amidst the crisis. Fueled by media reports of deaths in the Mediterranean, she and her husband were moved to action.

Rita: “We felt we had to do something.”

Upon reaching out to established NGO’s, she was told that there was either no coordinated response prepared or that the only need was financial. Exasperated by the lack of opportunity to become involved in an established aid effort, she began scouring the internet in hopes of finding individuals and groups at work on the ground.

Rita: “And contrarily to the, to these NGO’s, they all said, ‘Yes please! We need material! We don’t have anything. We don’t have a blanket to give them, we don’t have clothes for the children, they leave the boats, like, soaked. We need things.’ And none of them asked for money.”

On September 3, 2015, Rita and her husband started a Facebook page titled, RefugeesAidBCN, and began calling for donations. Even as efforts became more complex and more individuals involved, the centers of operations remained living rooms, cafes and borrowed spaces. Without support from the local government of Barcelona, nor its recognition, and lacking official NGO status, RefugeesAidBCN has been run from the ground up, independently and autonomously, creating its own networks of support, logistics and communication.

While independent and autonomous, neither of these groups are isolated, having networked with other grassroots organizations, NGO’s and government entities. For example, in January, I attended the second meeting of an organization founded in Germany with a Spanish branch based in Madrid, trying, at the time, to establish a hub in Barcelona. One of the primary focuses of this meeting was to establish contacts with CEAR/CCAR, two branches of a major NGO tasked with resettling refugees in Spain and Catalonia, respectively. Additionally, RefugeesAidBCN fundraising efforts have been managed by third parties such as Wallopop and logistics supported by experienced organizations such as Agility.

The independence of both groups was a constant source of pride for their members. However, this same autonomy has led to a questioning by many would-be collaborators, both individual and organizational, of their legitimacy. Looking to quantify their support for tax reasons and justify their own involvement, many businesses have been reticent to offer assistance without guarantee that these organizations are legally recognized. In response, RefugeesAidBCN has been working to obtain official status as an association which has proven difficult due to bureaucratic formalities such as electing

officers and creating a unique Catalan title. Throughout this process, the coordinators of the group have voiced their desire to fulfill such requirements without changing their independent structure and ground-up approach.

The efforts of each organization have been unique to themselves. One organization was focused on the housing of refugees with local residents in Barcelona based on successful efforts to do so in other countries including Germany and Austria as well as other municipalities of Spain. The initial efforts of RefugeesAidBCN were focused on obtaining and distributing donated articles of clothing to refugee camps throughout Europe. I have also encountered grassroots groups focused on a variety of aims including advocacy, legal aid, obtaining food and medical supplies and water rescue.

In addition to sending bulk donations to Greece and Germany, RefugeesAidBCN has also focused on empowering independent volunteerism. In their first open-to-the-public volunteer meeting, an attendee mentioned that he would be traveling to a camp in the near future and could fill a spare suitcase with donated goods provided by the organization. As mentioned in the section describing the field of investigation (2.2.1), a similar circumstance marked the beginning of my own participation.

The gathering and sending of donations, housing of refugees and many other tasks undertaken by these and other grassroots organizations have depended on the identification of needs. Much of the work done on the back-end has centered upon identifying those needs in various camps and within Barcelona. As those needs have changed, the organizations have adjusted their approaches. For example, based on environmental factors, RefugeesAidBCN has had to sort its donations according to demand. The call for donations has since decreased and the specificity of needed items has increased causing a shift in focus from bulk donations to individual items. To facilitate this, Amazon wish lists have been incorporated allowing individual donors to purchase and send specific items to various locations as needed.

Both organizations have also been active in raising awareness and facilitating sensitization. Representatives from both groups have delivered presentations at primary and secondary schools, universities and businesses as well as participated in conferences and public demonstrations. Awareness has also been raised through social media platforms, radio and television interviews, public round-table discussions, concerts and other events aimed at increasing public knowledge of the refugee crisis. Manifestations have been organized in collaboration with other organizations both grassroots and non-governmental and have included the work of artists, musicians, clowns and even acrobats.

Based on the slow response of the Spanish government, the emphasis on immediate assistance and awareness has also been shifting to one of protest. This shift in focus has presented one of the chief challenges both at the organizational and individual levels of each organization.

Ricardo: “And that’s the eternal debate. I mean, do we do that because people need it right now? But in doing so do we relieve the state from its responsibility? Or, on the other hand, do we put pressure on the state to do things? But that takes a while and what happens to people in the meantime? And I have to say, I don’t have a very clear answer for that. I mean, I think you’re supposed to do both and then... it’s important to make the distinction.”

This identity crisis has grown as the situation has evolved, leading to a questioning of roles and a self-examination of the actions taken by each organization and their effectiveness.

Christelle: “I also realized in all this, you also start to question yourself as to, how? At the beginning it was like, ‘Of course, we have to send things.’ But after a while I’m saying, ‘How effective is it?’ You know? Do we really match what they need? Is it a lot more work for the volunteers there? You know? Should we really... Maybe we give a lot of things they don’t even need. What are they doing with the rest of the clothes? You know? You start to feel a lot of questions that you don’t think at the beginning.”

Each group has taken on new activities to reflect those changing needs. Moving from donations, housing and other immediate assistance to awareness,

sensitization and protest, these groups are still undergoing self-examination and evolution based on the changing nature of the situation. Desirous of opportunities to help first-hand and implement their approaches to integration (which will be detailed shortly), the activities of these groups, as well as several other organizations in Catalonia, are now focused on convincing the Spanish government that the people of Barcelona are prepared to welcome the refugees who have yet to arrive.

Image 4: #ViesSegures



Source: Photographed by Brielle Netherland

This activity relates to steps being taken to raise awareness and spread information throughout the region. As mentioned earlier, conferences, presentations in schools, etc., are being used to prepare a welcoming atmosphere. These actions take place based on opportunity, relying on word-of-mouth and snowball communication. Events have been organized in which individual



volunteers have shared their experiences in refugee camps (myself included), representatives of the Syrian community in Catalonia have given their perspectives and members of other grassroots groups and NGO's have expressed their goals and demonstrated their efforts. All this has been centered upon establishing the "Culture of Welcome" in Catalonia, defining goals and achieving sustainability.

Rita: "Well, we really plan to do a lot of action now. A lot of noise in terms of preparing society here. To be welcoming. To know the culture. Respond to what we need to know, you know? As a community here. To make us feel comfortable in receiving them in a proper way. That's what now we will do, like, nonstop. We are really prepared to make a lot of noise."

Image 5: RefugeesAidBCN Conference



Conference organized by RefugeesAidBCN featuring volunteers (including the author, center), the president of the Associacio sirio-catalana lliure and representatives of other grassroots organizations and NGO's operating in Catalonia. Barcelona. May 5, 2016.

Source: Photographed by Brielle Netherland

The difficulty of managing logistics among grassroots organizations, complicated by a lack of institutional support and hierarchy, was quickly recognized by each group. Both have insisted on being managed in a democratic manner, eagerly welcoming individual support. Many of these individuals have developed their own roles based on personal strengths and experiences in order to fill perceived logistical gaps.

This need for support was one of the chief attractions for several of the volunteers and directors involved. The ability to donate time and skills in place of money and resources has been a driving force for their involvement. These advantages have led to the involvement of members with and without administrative skills who have responded to calls for support. Both organizations have relied on social media and personal communication to broadcast their needs and recruit assistance.

Responding to an offer of logistical support by an attendee of RefugeesAidBCN's first volunteer meeting, one of the co-directors expressed the difficulty of logistics and the welcomeness of support:

“Logística es difícil, así que, bienvenidos!”

Anna, one of the interviewees, volunteered by using her existing skills and resources to respond to a need made known at the same meeting:

“So, during the meeting where, where we met, actually, they were looking for a place where they could store all the boxes, etc. And so I tried. I didn't really know what to do, but that was a thing that I could do even online, on the internet. So I contacted several associations, or places where they could eventually have some space or asked friends whether they knew who could have such a space or... I contacted, I don't know, I guess seven different places and associations to ask whether they had something. And basically did some research because that's my job.”

Christelle described working with a local business in her neighborhood in Barcelona who had also obtained donations and did not have any plan in place to have them picked up or delivered. Finding that no one else had established the

necessary infrastructure, she took it upon herself to make calls and communicate with any organization she could access until the goods were successfully dispatched.

The difficulty of logistics was seen as a chief limitation to grassroots efforts by every interviewee. However, the ability of these groups to establish contacts within their own neighborhoods, thereby involving the wider community, was praised by every interviewee as well. This was one of the main factors by which the members of each organization distinguished their efforts from those of established NGO's. While recognizing the organizational, logistical and administrative prowess of NGO's, the grassroots organizers attributed their speed of communication, involvement in the surrounding community and flexibility to meet arising needs to the lack of structures and check-lists in their own organizations.

Rita: "It's been crazy like, looking for places to store everything. Looking for sponsorships. Looking for transport. Looking for a destination. Looking for people to do the inventory. Looking for boxes. Looking for tape. Looking for money to buy the pens. It's been crazy. But we did it. And we are really proud."

The directors of RefugeesAidBCN and the de facto leader of the other organization under observation also expressed the absorbing nature of the tasks they had undertaken. While at times overwhelming, the efforts to organize donations, store and ship them were, overall, successful. By January 2016, RefugeesAidBCN had sent five truckloads to camps in Greece and Germany. The credit for this was never taken by an individual. Instead, the interviewees applauded the fact that as one person became exhausted, another was able to step in. One volunteer even described to me that a chief advantage of the grassroots structure was the ability for people to "burn out" on a project without having to worry about the longevity necessary for running an NGO. This was advantageous because there was always someone ready to take over where another left off. I witnessed this sorting donations with various volunteers. Not only did different

people step in, but different people took charge at different times leading to a successful undertaking.

Mireia: “The first days I was like one of the volunteers, but the last day I was a little bit in charge of organizing the volunteers because I was in another inventory.”

Image 6: Inventory



RefugeesAidBCN volunteers (including the author, in grey) sorting donations at a borrowed creative-art space. Barcelona. January 30, 2016.

Source: Photographed by Brielle Netherland

The gathering and storing of donations and the organizing of meetings and conferences brought into the logistical puzzle the question of space. As I mentioned previously, many aspects of the organization were run from the living rooms of its directors. Additionally, managerial meetings were often held at coffee shops, while volunteer meetings, conferences and donation inventories have depended on borrowed spaces donated by individuals looking to offer their own forms of assistance.

Image 7: IAAC



Source: Photographed by the Author

The first public volunteer meeting of RefugeesAidBCN was held at the Institute for Advanced Architecture of Catalonia. The meeting took place amidst the sounds of saws, hammers and drills and I was struck by the sense that such a space lent to the meeting. By simply operating in a borrowed space, the feeling of grassroots autonomy was palpable.

The organizational meeting of the second group I observed was held at the office of one of its founding members. When looking to host a follow-up meeting, they were unable to use that space again as that member had since moved back to Ecuador severing the connection which the group had to that space. This instance highlighted not only the logistical difficulties of running grassroots organizations, but also the dependence of such groups on community involvement.



#### ***4.1.2 Organizational Culture***

In the introduction to “The Anthropology of Organizations,” Susan Wright describes how the term culture is used among organizational studies at informal and formal levels. Informally, it is used to describe the attitudes, values and concepts maintained by the workforce of an organization. Formally, it denotes a set of values which management seeks to foster in order to shape an organizational-wide attitude which becomes the face of that organization. (Wright, 1994, p. 3) Later in the same volume, David Marsden writes:

“The need to look at the culture of organizations in order to understand whether or not they are appropriate for achieving the objectives of that organization is increasingly recognized.” (Marsden, 1994, p. 58)

These comments are focused on the differences of management and culture among Western and Third World organizations as they apply to the influence of capitalism and globalization. I believe they hold true for the study of grassroots organizations as well. I employ the term here to refer to the attitudes, values and daily interactions of the individuals within these groups and the overall image they strive to present. The cultures of each group have been described through observation and questioning of management styles, motivating factors and goals. Other aspects include each group’s demographic characteristics and involvement with the surrounding community. Without the same level of involvement among other groups I cannot assume that similar cultures exists in other grassroots organizations. Some factors apply to one or the other organization while some apply to both and that distinction will be made when necessary.

One of the first observations I made regarding the “Culture of Welcome” in Catalonia, as well as grassroots organizations operating in Greece and Austria, is that these groups themselves exude a welcoming attitude.

Field Notes: “Another consistently obvious fact is that the members of grassroots organizations, and other volunteers, are incredibly quick to welcome

help and just as quick to incorporate other volunteers into their existing networks.”

This is an interesting point in comparison to volunteering with NGO's. As seen in Rita's experience, as well as my own efforts to work with NGO's in the field, the ability to volunteer with an NGO can be difficult. Several other interviewees reiterated this point. It can be harder to find a point of entrance or responsive contact and more difficult to meet the requirements of availability or qualification maintained by some NGO's. On the contrary, the grassroots organizations with whom I have worked have quickly welcomed help of any kind from individuals with widely varying profiles.

Member diversity is displayed in professional background, experience with refugees and volunteerism, nationality, age and sex. Interviewing various members quickly brought the first two features to light. Among the volunteers and directors are psychologists, architects, biologists, students, teachers and many other professional profiles. While some were able to draw upon their professional experience, many of those I talked to, both formally and informally, cited this experience as a first time working for refugees and some as a first volunteer experience in general. Others had volunteer experience in widely varying fields including humanitarian aid, youth and children, environmental activism and sports, while some had previously worked with refugees.

The diversity of nationalities among each group was also astounding. They are comprised of Spaniards from Catalonia and other regions, Italians, Portuguese, Germans, Americans, English, French, Polish and Dutch. While astounded by the overall diversity, it has also been striking how overwhelmingly Western European each group has been. I have worked with volunteers from Lebanon, Syria and Central America, but in these particular groups they have represented a small minority. Based on this variation of origin the common language is most often English followed by Spanish. The longer I worked with

RefugeesAidBCN the more often Catalan was spoken, especially as the amount of networking with other groups in Barcelona increased.

The average age and sex of both groups represented areas of lesser diversity. While there are certainly exceptions, most members are in their late twenties to late thirties. Additionally, each group, especially at the directorial level, is comprised mostly of women. In RefugeesAidBCN meetings, I was one of two men among eight directors and one of two men among eleven members in the second group. While I sought to understand some of the personal motivating factors of these individuals, I did not look to explain their demographics and did not gain any particular insight as to why they are so comprised.

Both organizations have sought to be run in a democratic manner. This means that they have encouraged the input of every member to reach decisions as a group. That said, a certain dependence on a leadership structure could be seen in both groups which has posed challenges.

RefugeesAidBCN has fallen under the leadership of its director, Rita, because of her founding role and committed involvement. Together with a core group of individuals, the organization is run by a type of board which meets to discuss event planning, finances and organizational focus. Board members manage various aspects of the group's operations including social media, web design, communication and logistics. The democratic nature they are striving for is seen in the fact that tasks are often exchanged and do not rely upon one individual for completion. The existence of a leadership structure also adds to image creation, lends legitimacy and assures potential collaborators that their questions can be answered by an end decision maker.

The second group under observation also set out to establish a democratic management system based on mutual involvement. The primary leadership of the group was based in Madrid with a branch newly started in Barcelona. After the initial leader of the Barcelona chapter returned to Ecuador, the group met together without an official decision maker. Ricardo was considered the de facto



leader because of his experience with the previous coordinator and his efforts to establish communication between other members of the group. Insisting that he was not the director, he hoped that someone else would step up to take on that role which eventually led to inaction. Ricardo points to a lack of determined leadership at the very beginning as the basis of the organization's chapter in Barcelona eventually dissolving:

“It’s always hard to set up a new team, but without a leader, I would say, it’s impossible. Even if you tried to organize very horizontally, at the beginning, when nothing is very clear as to who is doing what, you do need somebody to, not impose ideas, but at least to have some ideas. To propose what to do. To organize and stuff. And we didn’t have that here.”

This episode brought to light many of the difficulties of grassroots organizing. Without a head decision maker the group found it hard to obtain space, coordinate ideas and execute them. Ricardo also mentioned that it became difficult to remain active without the support of other NGO’s or the city council. Because their chief aim was the housing of refugees among the host population, the ability to coordinate with other entities was paramount. This and the lack of refugees actively arriving in the city led to the disbanding of the group in Barcelona. However, many of its members are still active throughout the city, displaying the flexibility of the grassroots infrastructure and, while still operating successfully out of Madrid and other Spanish cities, the possibility to reestablish efforts in Barcelona remains.<sup>7</sup>

One of the two hypotheses with which I started my investigation was that the personal experience of immigration would be a leading motivator for members of grassroots organizations to be involved in the refugee crisis. In other words, that having understood the difficulties of moving to a new location and integrating into a new society they would then want to help facilitate those processes for newly arrived refugees. While the diversity of those involved

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<sup>7</sup> While finalizing this report, members of this organization in Barcelona began, without instigation from Madrid, to reconvene.

initially appeared to support this hypothesis, I found that this connection was more coincidental than causal. The motivations cited were based far more on individual drive and, above all, empathy.

The most common reason for involvement was feeling a need to do something. I was greatly intrigued by this. Very few individuals were able to explain this need, but readily cited its existence. While some interviewees had other specific reasons for involvement, this need to act was a factor in every interview.

Anna: “You don’t know what to do, but you really feel the need of doing something, getting involved, trying to change things.”

Mireia: “That necessity to do something.”

Ricardo: “I like to say that I do what I do because I have to do it.”

Other reasons included a sense of empathy and, what I would call, reciprocity. In addition to empathizing with the needs of the forcibly displaced, many interviewees spoke of the fact that they would simply want to be treated in the same way should they find themselves in a similar situation.

Mireia: “We saw a bad situation here [in Spain during its own civil war], so we are trying to help as we would like to be helped in a similar situation.”

Rita: “It’s like treating people as people, as we would like to be treated. If tomorrow there is a war in Europe, in America, whatever, if we have to run away, we will be happy if someone welcomes us as well, no?”

Anna: “The thing that was most important is the fact of putting yourself in place of the others, what they are experiencing and saying, ‘Wow. This can not be true. It’s tough. It should not happen.’”

Certain factors seemed to accentuate that need: the images of Aylan Kurdi, press coverage of other deaths in the Mediterranean, knowledge of the Syrian civil war, etc. As awareness grew, the desire to help grew along with it and influenced their efforts to build awareness in their own society.

Rita: “All this news, all these stories, I was like... I couldn’t stop thinking about it! It was like, fuck! What? Why is this happening to other people? What can I do?”

Christelle: “Well ya, the image of the boy... I think for most of the people it was that image... And in the neighborhood, I would say, if you asked people, for most of them they would say, it’s because of that image and then having a look and saying, ‘Well, I want to do something.’”

These feelings were even more intense for those with children.

RefugeesAidBCN Volunteer: “As a parent you feel even more... Because you imagine that it could be your kid, you know?”

Family connection was another factor common to most of those interviewed. Imagining their own family members in similar situations drove them to action while some had family members who had experienced similar struggles, leaving them with the feeling that it was time to fulfill the rules of reciprocity and become involved.

Mireia: “In Spain we lived a similar situation when we had the civil war and a lot of people had to leave the country or the cities, as my grandmother. She had to leave this town because there wasn’t enough work there... So, [refugees] are leaving their cities, their towns, because they are afraid that they can die! So we just can help them. I think. I don’t know. That’s my, the main reason. It is. It’s just that.”

Ricardo: “Ever since I was a kid I’ve really looked up to my parents and what they taught me in terms of what’s fair and what’s not. And my father was in the Communist party during the last years of the dictatorship, first years of democracy... I’ve spent many, many hours with my dad talking about his experiences and what he was doing and what happened to him and to his friends. I mean, ya, to him it was nothing super super bad. I mean, he didn’t die of course. But he did spend some time in jail. Not too much, but he was there and he got beaten up once or twice and he... well, ya. He was also repressed in a way. And I was like, ‘Oh my god, my dad is my hero.’”

Rita: “My parents were refugees. That is, I think, that was the main reason, probably.”

The primary image which these organizations seek to promote is, indeed, one of welcome and, as will be seen in greater detail shortly, presenting this image is a key component to the grassroots approach to integration. Through marches and manifestations these groups have hoped to show that they are here and ready to accept refugees into their society. Using social media, an image of welcome and empathy is portrayed by posting information specific to the crisis, hosting petitions which support receiving greater numbers of individuals and transmitting messages of solidarity and understanding. These messages not only make their presence known, but also show a level of understanding of the background, experiences and culture of those who have been displaced. Additionally, the public impression trying to be made is one of inclusion and diversity.

Promoting this image and building this perception are key goals among both groups. The image itself is two-fold. On the one hand, they are hoping to demonstrate their own organizational cultures. On the other, they are hoping to give a welcoming appearance to Barcelona itself. By attributing this perception to the city and surrounding region, pressure is placed on the central government to acknowledge Catalonia's preparedness to accept refugees, as well as the city and region themselves to fulfill that receptive image. In addition, every physical and online manifestation has been aimed at assuring refugees that there are individuals and collectives whose arms are open and ready to receive them.

Facebook Description of the Second Organization Under Observation:

“Creemos que podemos establecer una forma más humana de dar la bienvenida a los refugiados.”

Anna: “The main thing [grassroots organizations] can do is to keep alive this sense of community. Like, ‘Hey! We exist!’ People that see things differently and want a different way of welcoming, they do exist and we are here.”

Another centerpiece of these organizations is their involvement in the surrounding community. Many members described their efforts as “people-to-

people”, reaching out directly to refugees and incorporating individuals within Catalonia into their work. This involvement also highlights the dependence that exists upon individual volunteers and other entities.

Image 8: Grito por los Refugiados



Source: Photographed by the Author

The people-to-people nature of these groups has been accentuated by the sense of common ground felt by their members. In addition to shared feelings of empathy and reciprocity, there was a feeling, especially within RefugeesAidBCN, that each individual maintained a certain understanding of the situation and felt the same need for involvement. This sense of common interest attributes to a high level of trust within the organization allowing for rapid immersion of diverse individuals, acceptance of short-term and small-scale involvement and delegation of important roles to individuals without previous experience.

The ability to involve members quickly and easily is seen as one of the chief advantages of grassroots organizing. These groups are characterized by spontaneity and flexibility or, in the words of Mireia:

“Something that pops!”

Through various social media platforms, the immediate needs of the organization can be expressed and met by individuals on a minute-by-minute basis.

Rita: “It’s much easier to get to the people like this.”

Through similar means of communication as well as personal interaction, local businesses have become involved as well.

The ability to work with individuals, organizations and associations has been a key piece of evidence by which grassroots organizations prove their effectiveness and relevance. The following correspondence, copied from Facebook, highlights this process:

A Taste of Home - The English Supermarket: “If you need another drop off place, you can use one or both of our shops.”

A Taste of Home - The English Supermarket: “We have a big collection at “A Taste of Home”, Florida Blanca. Can you collect it?”

RefugeesAidBCN: “Necesitamos alguien con una furgó para recoger bolsas de uno de los English Supermarkets (uno en Florida Blanca y el otro en Sitges) hasta Poble Nou. Es urgente, estan casí sin espacio! Quien se apunta?”

The organizational culture of each group is also marked by an acknowledgement of their own limitations. With this acknowledgment, they have reiterated the importance of NGO’s and other organizations in the same field. A common distinction was made between the ability of grassroots organizations to operate at a local level while NGO’s have the infrastructure and resources to operate at a higher, more political or technical level. The lack of resources, both financial and human, was acknowledged as an obvious challenge. The inability to

interact with refugees directly, based on existing policies and systems, was also lamented. Additionally, the distractions of and commitments to daily responsibilities can inhibit the individual activity of grassroots volunteers.

Every interviewee emphasized these challenges and limitations in their own words, while qualifying that they did not appear to be drawbacks, necessarily. Instead, I was struck by a widespread understanding that these organizations are seeking to establish themselves as one actor among many. While some members expressed frustration at the lack of action on the part of some NGO's and governmental agencies and believed that the grassroots role is to take that action on, I never witnessed a call for the replacement of such organizations by grassroots actors.

Rita: "I think what we do is great, but we are not anarchists in the way that we can do everything. I am very aware of our limits, you know?"

Ricardo: "So, I think it's important that all three [the government, NGO's and grassroots organizations] work together, or at least that... I mean, for the benefit of society, that the strengths of each are exploited and weaknesses minimized. Because not everybody needs to fill every hole. I mean, grassroots are good for one thing, the state is good for other things."

Mireia: "Both of them [NGO's and grassroots organizations] are necessary."

The roles they are looking to take on are of pressurization through which to urge on further action by NGO's and government entities, support through which to relieve some of the responsibility held by such organizations and, of utmost importance here, the facilitation of refugee integration at a local level beyond the structures and formalities of established systems.

Ricardo: "[In Germany] the state was doing what I think it should do, which was to accept refugees. Maybe not all the refugees it should. Maybe not in the best possible way. Maybe not fast enough. But it was doing that. The thing was that it was giving them shelter, tending to their material needs. Which is good. It's what the state is supposed to do. But, what's lacking there is the integration part."

## **4.2 The Integration Part**

After an in-depth look at two grassroots organizations in Catalonia, we can now examine how they define and approach the concept of integration. I would like to remind the reader of the limited perspective obtained based on current circumstances. While able to observe the actions of these groups in regard to internal operations and external demonstrations, their approaches to integration had to be mined from interviews and public statements. The statements and responses of the interviewees reflect the ways in which they believe integration should be approached from the grassroots level and the means by which they plan to do so. In the future, it would be of great interest to see these plans and approaches further implemented. The perceptions presented here give us a standard by which to judge the future actions of such groups. Therefore, the word approach is used not to describe actions taken, but perceptions and ideals upon which those actions will be based. With this information we can examine the grassroots approach to integration in terms of past individual experiences, socio-cultural expectations and personal and organizational conceptualizations.

In addition to hypothesizing that the motivation to work with refugees might stem from a sense of shared experiences, I began this investigation with the idea that individual expectations for integration might be directly linked to expectations encountered by those individuals who had already experienced relocation and resettlement. While forced to reject this hypothesis as it became apparent that this was not the case, several concepts were introduced which appeared to be rooted in the interviewees' personal experiences. I consider these background concepts as they demonstrated an individual awareness of factors which can directly influence the process of integration. They do not generally form part of the end approach because they cannot be directly influenced by the individuals in question. These concepts include cultural distance, support networks, work and housing environments and personal identification with the host society.



Cultural distance is the term I have applied to refer to perceived similarities or differences between the culture of resettlement and each interviewee's culture of origin. The more similar the culture of Barcelona appeared to the newcomer to that of his or her country of origin, the smaller the cultural distance seemed and the easier the process of adaptation felt.

Anna: "Culturally and food-wise and relationship with people is, of course, more similar here than, than it was in Germany, which I enjoyed very much, but for different reasons. Here it was a little bit more like coming home."

This distance was further lessened for those who already spoke Spanish or had experience with a similar language (Italian, Portuguese, e.g.) upon arriving.

Ricardo: "Here everybody speaks your language, everybody also likes to do the same kind of things you do. You have the same cultural background, so... I'd say it was easy."

Existing support networks, including friends and acquaintances as well as pre-established career opportunities, also contributed to a sense of easy transition. Where support networks did not previously exist, minimal cultural distance and shared personal experiences, such as having children, prompted the rapid creation of those networks.

Ricardo: "I already knew two or three people when I came so I was never really alone. And then I quickly got to know some more."

Christelle: "I met much more people once having kids. I mean then your life... it's just so easy to meet people in the barrio because otherwise, no. I didn't know many people here. Because I didn't go outside. I was just living here and didn't meet too many people, but once you have kids you will have a balance."

Living in neighborhoods where those networks could be created and having places of work where one could become involved with other residents also provided opportunities to become quickly acquainted with the new place of residence. Without worrying about employment or housing each individual could

focus on adapting. Even when these areas initially appeared challenging, they eventually proved advantageous in the overall process.

Each of these factors contributed to a sense of self-identification with the new location. Living in established housing, having steady employment, the ability to communicate and minimal cultural distance allowed the interviewees to quickly see themselves as active members of society. Identifying with the attitudes of that society also added to their sense of belonging. For example, sensing a preoccupation with human rights in Barcelona gave some individuals the sense that they could maintain their own ideals while living in Catalonia. Recognizing the multiculturalism and interculturalism of Barcelona also lent to the feeling that even as challenges arose, integration could and would be achieved in the long run.

To determine approaches to refugee integration as ideally implemented by each organization, two important questions were posed to every interviewee. The first was, “What would successful integration look like on a day-to-day basis?” followed by, “What role do you believe your organization can play in facilitating that integration?” The first caused significant pause for many interviewees. While readily asserting that a primary goal of grassroots organizations is to foster integration, respondents had to take time to gather their thoughts and develop their answers to this question. The importance of the second question was highlighted by the fact that many of the resulting descriptions contained several elements which did not fall within the capabilities of the organizations themselves, illustrating how the grassroots approaches are still being questioned and formulated.

Frequently cited aspects of successful integration included structural elements such as education, employment and housing, socio-cultural elements like language and religion and more abstract concepts such as mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and relationship building. Education was, most commonly, the first factor mentioned and consisted of two primary components. The first

was children. Great emphasis was placed on the role of education in facilitating the integration of refugee children within the host society. The assertion was frequently made that if the children of refugees could be integrated, the process for their family members and the refugee community as a whole would be improved. This was due to the perception of schools as places where refugee children can interact with local children and the belief that education adds to an individual's self-determination and ability to cope in a new environment.

Christelle: "I think it's really important that they integrate with the local schools, that they don't get special schools."

Mireia: "I think the education and the kids. I mean, it's the best way that you can feel that you are integrated in some place... When you live in another country, I can imagine, that you feel that you deserve that place when you have your kids there."

Anna: "Only during the process of learning can you integrate."

This second fact relates to the second component, namely, the meeting of expectations. From an educational standpoint, interviewees believed that it is important that those who wish to continue their studies be allowed to do so. Additionally, they believed that the educational experiences of refugees in their countries of origin should be recognized and valued by institutions and employers in the country of resettlement.

Meeting expectations also played a major role in the respondents' emphasis on employment. Beyond simply finding employment, interviewees often reiterated the importance of *meaningful* employment. This highlighted an interesting aspect of integration from a mutually beneficial perspective. The ideal presented was that refugees with past experience, education and knowledge should be given work in their areas of expertise as a way to respect their individual identities while increasing the level of proficiency present in the work force.

Anna: “To develop your human being characteristics which is your profession, because probably many of them already have a profession. Or your education, because many of them, they’re young, they’d like to become something. And there’s kind of a, I think, big potential in this group of people.”

Rita: “And [work] that matches their aspirations as well. You know, it’s not like, ‘Go to the restaurant or to the field.’ What if you wanted to be a doctor?”

Christelle: “So, if someone who was a doctor, for example, comes here and they put him to paint, maybe he won’t use his real skills, you know? And it won’t help.”

Another important structural element was that of housing. The chief priority was that refugees not be left in camps. For every interviewee, the ability to live independently and decently was considered an inalienable human right. Following this, it was important to several respondents that refugees be given accommodation within Barcelona. Several specifically mentioned dispersal and segregation as strategies which impede integration and work directly against their approaches, as they depend on people-to-people interaction.

Another major facilitator pointed out by every respondent was language.

Rita: “Once you know the language it’s very easy that you find your own way into the society.”

Learning the language was seen as a socio-cultural imperative and a structural challenge. Some recommended special classes for newcomers which would allow them to learn the language before moving on to other occupational or educational opportunities. Several suggested coaches who could be assigned on an individual basis and many voiced the belief that a chief advantage of the grassroots system of communication was the ability to call on volunteers who could translate, interpret and teach as needed. In this way, networks could be created whereby the language of the host society could be learned and relationships built, simultaneously.

Discussing the language of the host society led to an interesting point which I would like to briefly dwell on. It was difficult to come to a consensus as

to whether the language of greater importance within Catalonia, and especially Barcelona, is Catalan or Spanish. This debate intrigues me and, I believe, merits further investigation. Most interviewees acknowledged their belief that Spanish is a more useful language and that learning it would allow refugees to pursue other opportunities outside of Catalonia. However, several participants also admitted that not speaking Catalan has caused them to feel less incorporated into Catalan culture. This debate reiterates the crucial question of, “Integration into what?”

Posing this question to the grassroots members under observation revealed one of the most central elements to their approach. While learning the language of the host society, contributing to the work force and being educated in the local school system were important factors, none of the interviewees argued for an approach to integration by which a refugee would *become* Catalan, Spanish or any nationality other than that into which her or she was born. In other words, the abstract concepts of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and relationship building among individuals of mixed cultural heritages were of greater importance than any changes required by either the dominant or non-dominant society. When asked what practices or norms refugees would be expected to “shed”, the only items mentioned were those which were believed to intrinsically infringe upon certain human rights (e.g., female genital mutilation was named by two separate individuals). While change, be it cultural, social, environmental, etc., was considered inevitable, no interviewee considered any particular changes among either group to be prerequisite to or a result of successful integration.

While difficult to define and even more so to implement, the abstract ideas of peace and respect are paramount to the grassroots approach to refugee integration. I believe the best way to describe their views on such notions is to present them in the words of the interviewees themselves.

Anna: “Successful integration? I think success in integration is peace. Like, it doesn’t matter if they don’t speak super well the language. Of course that would be of great help. Or it doesn’t matter if they stay partially among them. No, I see, in that sense Barcelona was a bit of an interesting place. Like, Raval or

even Poble Sec a little bit, you clearly see that there are different cultures that have not become Spanish, fully Spanish. But it doesn't matter! Because as long as you can live together in peace and work together and... just live together, I think that's perfectly fine. And I'm happy to see people that dress in different ways and speak a different language and move in a different way, but that can have a, like a relationship with you in the moment in which you cross and exchange words and they are your neighbors and it's perfectly fine. So, I think in one word, perfect integration, for me, is living together in peace."

RefugeesAidBCN Volunteer: "I think it would be a kind of community where everyone is respected in its own way of being or languages or religion and feels respect for the other one being, having a different thing. And then has enough common ground, maybe even physically common ground, like, I don't know, parks where everybody feels like he's not offended by somebody else... So, to have your own space, but then enough space in common to also have shared identities, part of a shared identity. We have a common identity, but we have our own identity. I mean, ideally, I think mix. Mix is probably something necessary... and challenging."

Ricardo: "Everybody just needs to respect each other. That's the whole thing."

RefugeesAidBCN Volunteer: "Which is then an important part of integration... knowing someone. Really knowing someone."

We have already seen the ways in which the grassroots groups under observation are operating. Having started out focused on physical needs and immediate assistance, both are currently focused on raising awareness which calls for further government action and prepares society at large to embody the mutual respect and peaceful coexistence by which they have defined successful integration. This is an important factor in the grassroots approach. Recognizing the need for mutual accommodation and respect, grassroots organizations in Barcelona have, in fact, begun to implement their approaches even in the absence of a wave of refugees. However, in my questioning, I wanted to understand the ways in which these groups plan to facilitate integration directly among refugees in Catalonia. Many of the structural facilitators for ensuring integration are already in place among NGO's in Catalonia and many of the participants acknowledged that Barcelona itself is prepared to welcome refugees and asylum seekers with open arms. Therefore, I sought to identify the niche which each

group hopes to fill upon the arrival of more refugees and the plans they have to foster the “Culture of Welcome” on a daily basis.

The overall vision of these groups is to be the spearhead of interaction among newly arrived asylum seekers and society. While emphasizing several structural elements of successful integration, it has also been seen that they acknowledge the importance of NGO’s and government systems to facilitate those elements. At the same time, they have called into question the ability of structured, formalized systems to respond to the interpersonal needs of refugees after arriving in Catalonia. Thus, while generally considered secondary or supplemental to the tasks of specialized organizations, the attention which individually motivated grassroots volunteers can offer to individual refugees is key to their approaches. Many interviewees also distinguished between the roles of the state and NGO’s in facilitating structural integration and that of grassroots groups with their flexibility and personal interaction in ensuring the success of that integration once the structural processes have been implemented. In other words, where the state or an NGO may provide language classes, grassroots volunteers will provide personal coaches who offer the opportunity to practice those language skills in a relaxed, relevant environment. Where it is the government’s responsibility to provide housing for refugees in a neighborhood, it is the perceived responsibility of grassroots members to knock on their doors and greet them as neighbors. These responsibilities are recognized as shared by the host community as a whole. However, the goal of these groups is to actively initiate activities which bring together members of the refugee community and the surrounding neighborhood, city or region. For example, Christelle mentioned the ability to:

“Accompany [refugees] to different tasks. Organize some events... Family events with local families. Like, sport competitions with different kids.”

The goal of these events would be the mixing of refugee and local families.

Rita: “Like doing soccer, a soccer game between not only refugee children, but with children from Barcelona.”

Recognizing the need for government intervention and NGO support, grassroots members also re-emphasized that grassroots groups are neither government nor NGO affiliated. Because of this, they see themselves as more directly representing the host society itself. Because they are not in a position which either requires or pays them to reach out to newly arrived refugees, there is a sense that the willingness and volunteerism of these individuals expresses a more genuine sense of societal welcome. As a local Catalan, Mireia pointed out that when the government imposes plans for social integration, the result can often be a reticence among members of the dominant society to participate due to the simple fact that it has been imposed. In other words, if the events, gatherings, interactions, programs, etc., are organized from the ground up, the existing members of society might be more willing to participate as representatives of their own identity and not their government's.

Mireia: “I think that really this kind of group will be really really necessary in the integration of the people who arrive. Because if not it could be... you can see it's something that's... imposed by the government. So, I think that it could create tensions in the society. So if there is a big intervention of small, but different groups of people... general society will be more aware that they have to integrate all these new people.”

Perhaps the chief implementation goal of these groups, reflective of all the other goals presented, is that of building relationships between refugees and individuals among the host society. This aim is difficult to express in actionable terms or measure through quantifiable means. However, that very fact is what makes it a guiding factor in the grassroots approach. Stemming from this, the members of each organization often distinguished their goals from those of NGO's and the state by emphasizing their qualitative nature. Rather than seeking to fulfill measurable requirements, the goal of these groups is to maintain daily relationships with refugees and asylum seekers in a way that cannot be distinctly



planned nor quantified. It is this aspect of the integration process that every interviewee considered as missing from current NGO and government processes. Whether this is true of those processes or not is not the subject of this investigation. However, it is here, in the relational, unquantifiable, interactive field of refugee integration that the grassroots approach is striving to make its mark.

Mireia: “It’s not just when they arrive, but the integration in all the different aspects in the life, in the daily life in the cities. I think that [grassroots organizations] have a lot to do with, I don’t know, helping the kids to be integrated with other kids. There are a lot of activities that could be done with all these kids and the families to be integrated with other families, to create new friendships, to get them involved, quickly involved in the society. And this can’t be done by the government. *I mean, you can give them a house. You can give them a school. You can give them food. But, somebody has to hug them. It’s like, I don’t know... They need to be hugged when they arrive!*”

### **4.3 The Refugee Question Revisited**

As seen in the theoretical section on the refugee question (3.3), the conceptualization of who is or is not a refugee is flexible and contextual. The distinctions made are political, legal, socio-cultural and individual. This has been especially true amidst the current crisis. Emanuela Roman, writing for the *La Vanguardia* 2015 dossier, refers to the situation itself as a crisis of distinction between refugees and emigrants who have left their countries of origin for reasons other than politically recognized violence or persecution. (Roman, 2015) This same distinction leaves us to question the concepts of choice and force. Whether an individual chooses to migrate or is forced to do so drastically effects the options available to that individual upon arriving in a new location. While legislative distinctions are made in certain arenas, a goal of this investigation has been to question those distinctions made in the grassroots arena. As has already been seen, these groups seek to change the perception of their governments and pressure them to action. In asserting that pressure, I believe it is important to question how these organizations themselves classify who should be the recipients of those actions. How do they distinguish between refugees and other immigrants and do their ideals of integration based upon peaceful coexistence and mutual respect apply to both?

The first point to be made is that there is a distinction. Each interviewee was directly asked how he or she would distinguish between refugees and other types of immigrants. Overwhelmingly, the distinction was situational. Relying on the fundamental element of choice, the key distinguisher for each interviewee was the fact that refugees are seen as having none. For most of those with whom I have interacted among these organizations, not only interviewees, there is an attitude that the lack of choice on the part of refugees to leave their homes should result intrinsically in a lack of choice for the residents of Europe to offer them aid. The idea of reciprocity which I introduced earlier (see section 4.1.2 Organizational Culture) is prevalent not only in their conversations about

integration but also their differentiation of refugees and other migrants. Offering assistance to those who have been forced to flee their homes is considered a moral imperative among the majority of grassroots volunteers.

Mireia: “Because they are forced to and they just want to save their lives! And it’s something that, it’s like, so basic. So, so basic... We have to understand that and help them as much as we can.”

A popular slogan which appears at many marches and demonstrations, in the form of a hashtag, is “#UErgonya” in Catalan or “#UErgüenza” in Spanish, both created from the respective words for “shame”. (See Image 7.) The idea behind these slogans and much of the rhetoric among protests and other manifestations is that the EU is not fulfilling an obligation which it has to the vast number of individuals crossing its borders.

Image 9: #UErgonya



Source: Facebook

This idea of choice is, of course, dependent on the situations in the countries of origin. Interviewees referred to emergency, war and violence as elements which have led to the denial of refugees’ choice to remain in their homes. This distinction has effected their actions and approaches to integration.

Another element pointed out by many interviewees as a necessary aspect of the integration process is that of psychological care to deal with the traumas experienced by those escaping war and persecution. While not claiming the expertise to implement this step at the grassroots level (although, some do, in fact, possess that expertise), it is taken into consideration and recommended as something that should be handled at the state or NGO level. In rousing society to welcome refugees, many awareness campaigns are based on spreading information about their reasons for flight. For example, the current Syrian conflict has been compared to Spain's civil war in the 1930's. The idea in this has been to relate the trials of those arriving with the trials experienced in Spain, Catalonia and Europe as a whole with the hope of inspiring empathy among the residents of the receiving society.

Another distinction which has affected their approaches to integration is that of time. Every interviewee agreed that there is no time frame which can be applied to the integration processes for refugees. However, they often mentioned that the uncertainty as to how much time would be spent in a given society could complicate those approaches. For example, if a refugee hopes to return to his or her country of origin, integration may prove less successful. This correlated for many with the idea that transient migrants who travel by choice may have difficulty integrating because they do not plan to embed themselves within a new society. Overall, the consensus was that adding an expected timeframe to the integration process for refugees would be detrimental based on the common conception that their presence in a given society is never based upon a premeditated length of time.

RefugeesAidBCN Volunteer: "If I know you're going to stay here only for two years, would I invest? Like, would I be less interested in developing a relationship or would I be less interested in showing a refugee around?"

Mireia: "Because you never know if you could be [here] for two years, five, ten, or life. It's something that's impossible to say. And maybe what we said, some

of them want to go back home, but some of them decide to stay. Because they found something better or useful or, I don't know, they just want to stay."

Rita: "You can not put a limit to that. Syria is destroyed. How can you say, 'Ok, you have five years integration.' Then, 'Go!' No. Like you do to a relative. When someone is in need. 'You don't have a home? You're divorced? You lost everything? Please stay on my sofa for as long as you want.' You know, you don't plan a week of integration. Or two weeks. You see?"

In discussions on choice and reasons for which individuals leave their own countries, another interesting correlation arose. While most agreed that the situation of each individual should be brought into account when dealing with immigrants and that priority should be given to refugees due to their lack of choice, the situations of some economic immigrants and other migrants were also considered dire enough to justify their seeking refuge in Europe. The remaining distinguisher was the level of emergency in each situation. The higher the level of emergency the more priority they felt the situation should receive. However, they also consider the mistreatment of immigrants who flee poverty, environmental disasters or undesirable living conditions as a mark of shame unto itself.

Ricardo: "What I mean is that, at the end of the day, people are fleeing their country which is where pretty much everyone wants to be because it's where your family is, your... all that. And they're doing that because they have no choice. Either because their going to be killed right away or because they're going to be killed slowly because of hunger or disease or whatever... The plight of some seems more dire than that of others and it is... You need to look at each individual case. But ya, to me, everybody is entitled to a full life and if you are not able to do that where you're from and it's not because you're lazy, it's because of what's going on which has nothing to do with you, then you should be allowed to move around."

This correlation between types of immigrants leads to the next question. When asked if immigrants should expect the same approaches to integration as refugees, the response, again overwhelmingly, was yes. While the grassroots movement is calling for a faster, more effective response for handling the refugee crisis, it is also pushing for a more welcoming atmosphere for all.

Christelle: “I don’t think there should be any difference. There really shouldn’t.”

The most common distinction was not made between refugees and other migrants who are profiting from the same migratory flows, but between those who emigrate from prosperous situations and those who emigrate from more difficult situations. Often, this distinction was most exemplified within the organizations themselves.

Rita: “Because for me, I’m an immigrant and I never had any problems whatsoever, you know? To get a job, to whatever. Because I didn’t come here without resources, same as you, you know? Because we are VIP immigrants and we have everything.”

Ricardo: “You with your knowledge would not be as well off as you are here if you had been born in Eritrea or in North Korea.”

Related to the understanding of choice and forced displacement, part of the awareness and protest mounted by these organizations is intended not only to spread information about the crises in other countries, but to lobby for EU intervention in those crises.

Mireia: “I think that we should think more about the reasons that make them leave their countries and trying to do something there. Just for once. Do something there.”

While the primary goal of presenting that information is to encourage a welcoming environment here in Catalonia, many of these groups are beginning to call for further action to end the civil war in Syria, build infrastructure in sub-Saharan Africa, etc. I observed this change in focus begin to take place at the very end of my investigation and it is still occurring in direct response to examining the needs of those most directly effected.

President of Associació sírio-catalana lliure: “El problema en Siria no es un problema humanitaria. Es un problema político. Entonces, si quieres ayudar a los sirios, tienes que ayudar a solucionar el problema políticamente.”

To conclude the ethnographic section of this work, I would like to introduce the perspective of those most concerned: refugees themselves. One of the original goals of this investigation was to determine if the grassroots organizations in Catalonia are truly addressing the needs of refugees and asylum seekers. Tangentially, I wanted to know if they were doing so in a way which further distinguished them from NGO's working to do the same. In speaking with refugees in Austria and Greece I was able to obtain a perspective on their views regarding those efforts. In speaking with Syrian immigrants here in Catalonia, I quickly recognized areas of great importance to the Syrian community which, as best they can, the grassroots groups of Catalonia are working to address.

At the first public conference hosted by RefugeesAidBCN, the president of the Associació sírio-catalana lliure was invited to speak. He presented his unique perspective on the war in Syria and its effect on the overall refugee crisis. The focus of his presentation was to demonstrate that the situation in Syria is not yet solved. Agreeing with other experts at the same conference, including an integration specialist from Canada, he mentioned that Syria has not been a historical place of origin for refugees. The sentiment he hoped to convey was that Syria did not want to continue being a sender of refugees. This was reiterated in forceful tones by the other Syrian immigrant whom I was able to interview and other Syrian conference attendees. All agreed that, while thankful for the open arms and welcoming nature of organizations like RefugeesAidBCN and others throughout Catalonia and Europe, their chief desire is that the situation in Syria itself be resolved. In response, much of the action now taken by these groups is centered upon calling for European intervention in Syria.

While not a prevalent theme in every discussion, it is worth noting that one of the aspects of the grassroots approach to integration has been that of understanding the contexts in refugees' countries of origin. By incorporating the perspectives of refugees themselves, the grassroots movement in Catalonia hopes to show a level of sensitivity and knowledge as well as action. As a result, their

hope is that integration will be fostered not only by mutual respect, but also by mutual knowledge and understanding of the overall situation.

Lastly, while I was not able to interview an exhaustive number of refugees, I would like to present what I was able to glean through conversation with several newly arrived individuals. While working at two refugee camps in Europe, I asked several individuals about where they had received help and whether or not they had noticed a difference between the assistance provided by the government, NGO's and grassroots organizations. In general, there was little distinction. Often, the refugees I spoke with could not tell me what organizations they had received help from, sometimes due to the fact that the names of those organizations were difficult for them to pronounce or recall. In every conversation the work of volunteers was highly praised and in this aspect a distinction was made between ground-up and top-down assistance, the preference overwhelmingly given to ground level aid. Individual volunteers were seen as vital to refugees' ability to integrate and acquaint themselves with society, while governmental bureaucracy was often viewed as an obstacle or hindrance. However, refugees could rarely tell whether or not a volunteer represented a given association, even if that association was, in fact, the government. There was also a regular sense of frustration in the lack of government aid regarding legal matters that volunteers were not able to fulfill. As the grassroots organizations in Catalonia have insisted, this highlights the fact that each level of assistance is necessary. All in all, there was an attitude of gratefulness among the refugees I spoke with, not based on where help was received, but on simply receiving it. To conclude, I would like to share a thought offered by one of the refugees whom I befriended in Vienna when asked where he had been able to find help and who had been of the greatest assistance to him and his fellow refugees:

“Every one can help us. We cannot say just only one or just one of them. All of them help us.”



## ***5. Conclusions***

This investigation has revealed several crucial factors regarding grassroots approaches to integration, self-differentiation from existing NGO's and conceptualization of refugees, as well as some contextual effects of interculturalism. The chief factors discovered regarding integration include the fact that their approaches mirror an academic conceptualization of integration (Berry, 1997), acknowledge the phases, differences (Gordon, 1964) and structural elements of integration (Ager & Strang, 2008) and are focused on sociocultural interaction. The immeasurability of this interaction is the chief distinguisher given when comparing to NGO's. The effects of interculturalism can be seen in the organizational nature of each group and their focus on defending the intercultural reputation of Catalonia (Rodríguez-García, 2012; Zapata-Barrero, 2014). Finally, the grassroots mentality towards refugees has been seen to allow for contextual fluidity, focus on choice and displacement and emphasize moral responsibility toward immigrants of any profile seeking to improve their lives.

## **5.1 Back to Integration**

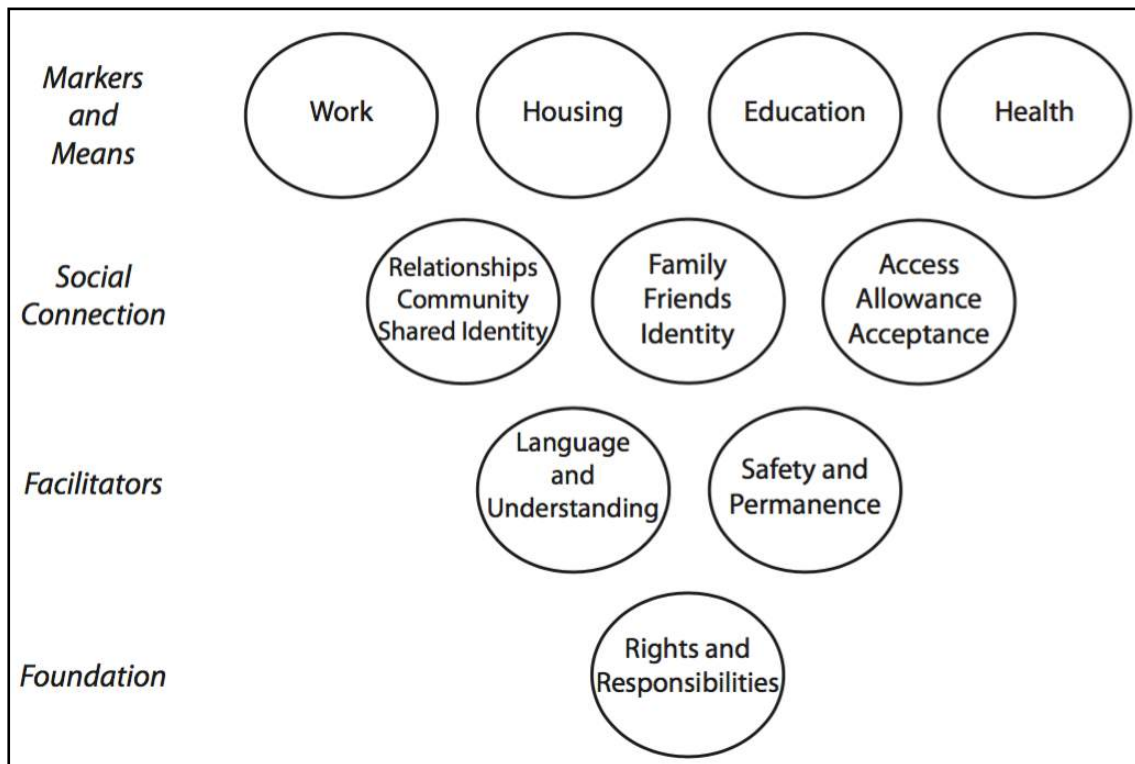
Perhaps the most obvious fact revealed by this investigation is that the conceptualizations of integration among the grassroots organizations in Catalonia mirror those presented in current academic literature. This is seen in their insistence on diversity exemplified by mutual respect, intercultural relationships and peaceful coexistence as well as a recognition of necessary structural elements. Overall, the grassroots approach defines integration as a process in which two societies actively interact in a bidirectional manner, respecting and adapting the cultural expectations of each. (Berry, 1997, 2005; Rodríguez-García, 2015)

While admitting their limitations in providing structural facilitation, each interviewee mentioned the importance of elements such as education, housing and employment. Additionally, there was an awareness of the phases of integration. Aligning to the views of Gordon (1964), the difference between structural and cultural integration play a role in the approaches of these groups and there is an acknowledgement of the need to have structural elements in place previous to sociocultural elements.

While some structural factors did not play as prominent a role in every interview and, therefore, were not all included in the preceding description, every factor mentioned in Ager and Strang's (2008) framework of integration was mentioned by at least one individual. Replacing the terms used in their work, Ager and Strang's conceptual framework can be redrawn using terminology specifically introduced by the interviewees. (See Figure 3.)

Social interaction for the furtherance of integration forms the basis of the grassroots approach. The grassroots mindset has shown a keen awareness of the host society's role and responsibility in providing an environment in which integration can occur. (Berry, 1997, 2005) Grassroots groups are not the only actors concerned in society and their members have recognized the need to

Figure 3: Conceptual Framework Defining Core Domains of Integration Markers Adapted for Grassroots Organizations



Source: Adapted by the Author from Ager & Strang, 2008, p. 170

involve more than their own members in that process. Their goal then is to catalyze that interaction. Bach et al., (as cited in Castles et al., 2010) have pointed out the importance of grassroots organizing as such a catalyst:

“Grassroots organising is a useful approach in promoting opportunities for interaction among groups at the local level.” (Bach et al., as cited in Castles et al., 2010, p. 144)

“‘Bottom-up’ processes often work better than ‘top-down’ ones.” (Bach et al., as cited in Castles et al., 2002, p. 144)

It is this aspect of the process that both organizations in question have sought to emphasize.

This emphasis has led to one of the chief insights gained from this investigation. While seeking to fulfill the role of facilitating socio-cultural interaction and integration, this investigation has shown that the grassroots organizations in Catalonia are not seeking to quantify that facilitation. While

policy makers and researchers are frequently preoccupied with the need to provide quantitative data by which to measure the successful implementation of various approaches to integration, the need to quantify such data is seen by the individuals involved with these groups as one of the primary drawbacks to current institutionalized approaches. In contrast, the grassroots approach is centered upon qualitative, abstract factors such as relationship building, mutual respect and a feeling of peaceful coexistence among co-residents within society. A leading mantra of the grassroots movement in Catalonia has been that these elements are unmeasurable and should remain so. Based on this fact, such groups perceive themselves as invaluable to the process of interaction at the local level. The abstract nature of such approaches gives grassroots organizations the perceived advantage in facilitating events, personal interaction and individual investment which are not dependent upon established time frames, quota-based results or check-listed indicators of success which are the drawbacks pointed out by grassroots participants of the existing NGO and governmental processes in place. While insisting that the structural support provided by NGO's and government agencies is necessary, they find structures themselves to be limiting when it comes to daily, personal interaction. Instead, hoping to build upon those established structural elements, they seek to define and approach integration by asking those concerned and measuring its success not through policies and structures, but through ground-level implementation and daily outcomes only perceivable to those directly involved. (Abraham, 2014; Kortmann, 2015; Rodriguez-García, 2015)

## **5.2 The Interculturalism Effect**

The importance of pluralistic societies in allowing newcomers to integrate has already been established. (Berry, 1997) One of the conclusions that can be drawn from this investigation is that not only are strategies of acculturation and integration affected by the host society, but also the approaches to facilitating integration by members of that society. (Zapata-Barrero, 2009) This has been highlighted in two primary ways among the grassroots organizations studied here.

The first is seen in the grassroots approach taken to not only present themselves as welcoming and inclusive, but also to reemphasize the accommodating nature of Catalonia itself. (Rodríguez-García, 2012; Zapata-Barrero, 2014) Many interviewees highlighted the existing awareness within Barcelona and the pre-established concerns with human rights, equality and coexistence which they feel the city and surrounding region exemplify. While protesting the inactivity of the central government, the grassroots movement in Catalonia has sought to vindicate the actions of local government to provide for refugees and asylum seekers and add resonance to the region's calls for further action.

Secondly, the effect of Barcelona's existing interculturalism can be seen in the diversity of the groups themselves. While not necessarily basing their approaches to refugee integration on their own experiences, the ability of these individuals to themselves integrate has influenced their desire for involvement. Citing a feeling of self-identification with their surroundings, the interviewees have sought to continue building a welcoming environment in which refugees will not be expected to shed their own cultural norms and where both the dominant and non-dominant societies experience mutual respect and accommodation. Having been able to integrate into Catalan society on their own terms, these individuals, rather than basing their expectations on those

experiences, insist on highlighting the expectations of refugees themselves by which they can, in turn, integrate on their own terms.

An additional effect of the interculturalist policies of Catalonia, noticeable to an outside observer, is that for the grassroots approach to center upon sociocultural action, supplementary to structural facilitators, those structural facilitators must already be in place. While those at work among the grassroots organizations have not expressly demonstrated this fact, I believe its presence has served as a foundational element in the formation of their approaches to integration. This may be the result of the fact that these organizations are already aware of the intercultural attitudes of Catalonia's government (Rodríguez-García, 2004, 2012; Zapata-Barrero, 2010) and trust that those elements will be supplied, allowing them to focus on ground-level interaction.

Image 10: L'Ajuntament de Barcelona



Source: Photographed by the Author

### **5.3 Those Most Concerned**

Another key finding of this research has been the awareness of the grassroots approach to the contextual fluidity of refugee conceptualization. (Scherschel, 2011) One of the chief indicators of this recognition is the insistence on spreading awareness of the specific situations experienced by refugees. By asking those affected, grassroots organizers in Catalonia have taken into account both the humanitarian and political natures of the current crisis which have then influenced their efforts. By relating the current situation to past situations in varying locations, the grassroots rhetoric has demonstrated the changing associations made between refugees and distinctions of class, race and nationality. (Scherschel, 2011)

This awareness has led to three key factors in the grassroots approaches. The first is that there is a distinction made between refugees and immigrants of choice. This distinction is maintained to ensure that needed assistance for refugees is provided and implemented in a timely manner and that the before-mentioned structural facilitators are in place. The grassroots mantra warns against the blurring of such distinctions as this has been demonstrated to potentially endanger those seeking asylum and prolong processes for requiring needed aid. (Fuller, 2005; Fullerton, 2005) Secondly, emphasis has been placed on the examination of choice. Grassroots members believe it is important to take the reasons for exodus into account when discussing migrants of any kind. This is crucial as it ties into the last factor, that of equal treatment for all immigrants, especially those facing dire conditions in their countries of origin, and congruent expectations for their respective integration. In this we find that the “Culture of Welcome” in Catalonia is being established for all.

## **5.4 The Next Step**

Finally, I would like to illustrate a few ways in which the results of this investigation have been applied and may be applied in the future. As a collaborative investigation desirous of applicability in a real-world setting, I have already shared the insights gained from this investigation with the leading members of RefugeesAidBCN. In doing so I have made recommendations based on the call for legitimacy among contacts hoping to collaborate and voiced concerns regarding the continued awareness of the host society's role in the integration process. As the roles of each organization have evolved, I have sought to apply my research in a way which reminds their members of their own goals to establish mutual respect and accommodation. To this end, I have recommended that demonstrations of support take into account the attitudes of Catalonia's existing residents, not only those of the arriving refugees and asylum seekers. For example, I have asked whether certain manifestations encourage a welcoming atmosphere among society's members or, rather, incite opposition. Additionally, I have encouraged further examination of the needs of refugees themselves and the identification of specific gaps in established governmental and NGO approaches.

While the future applicability of this investigation is not fully known, I hope that it will be viewed as an example of the quality of the ethnographic approach to examining abstract approaches to ambiguous subjects with non-quantifiable results. As an anthropological investigation, this research seeks to be of use in highlighting some of the contextual factors involved in approaching the integration of individuals from varying cultures into a society where each are welcome.

Lastly, I believe this work may serve as a single piece for understanding the still in-process puzzle which is, the "Culture of Welcome".



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# Appendix

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Figure 4: Interview Guide

Interview Guide	William Netherland	RefugeesAidBCN
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## Personal Data

Name:

Sex:

Age:

## Personal Integration Experience

1. Where do you live currently?

2. Where are you from?

*If Barcelona, skip to question 5. If not Barcelona, continue with question 3.*

3. Can you describe what it was like to move to Barcelona? The changes that you went through, things that were hard to adjust to or simply any challenges that you faced?

4. Did you seek or obtain any help from organizations in the city to assist you in that transition?

## Personal Motivation

5. Why did you want to work with refugees?

## Experience with RefugeesAidBCN

6. Can you tell me about your experiences with RefugeesAidBCN?

*Descriptions of interactions within the organization, reasons for working with them and specific roles and actions.*

## Comparison to NGO's

7. Have you ever worked with any NGO's in this field?

8. What would you say separates RefugeesAidBCN from existing NGO's in the same field?

## Integration

9. Can you describe to me how you think refugees should be integrated into society?

*Assimilation, multiculturalism, segregation, work integration, cultural maintenance, language, etc.*

## Immigrants vs. Refugees

10. Do you think that those same steps should be taken to integrate immigrants who are not necessarily refugees into society?

11. How do you differentiate between the two?

Source: Created by the Author

Figure 5: Data Analysis Sample

Catalonia and the "Culture of Welcome"

William Netherland

Data Analysis

## Data Analysis

### Code Categories and Codes

#### 4-Tier System

#### Grassroots Organizations

##### Operations

##### Structure

Independence

##### Donations

Collection

Distribution

Enabling Individual Volunteers

Identifying Needs

Networking

##### Information and Awareness

School Visits

Presentations

Marches and Demonstrations

Round-Table Discussions

Symbolism

Lack of Militarism

##### Technology and Communication

##### Online Presence

Social Media

Google Docs

Search Engines

Web Pages

##### Internal Communication

Facebook

WhatsApp

Email

Face-to-Face

Meetings

Conferences

##### Press Coverage

Articles, Blogs and Interviews

Media - Radio, Television, Online

##### Goals

##### Activism

Pressure

Criticism

Political Involvement

Community Awareness

##### Integration

Community Events

Foster an Attitude of Welcome

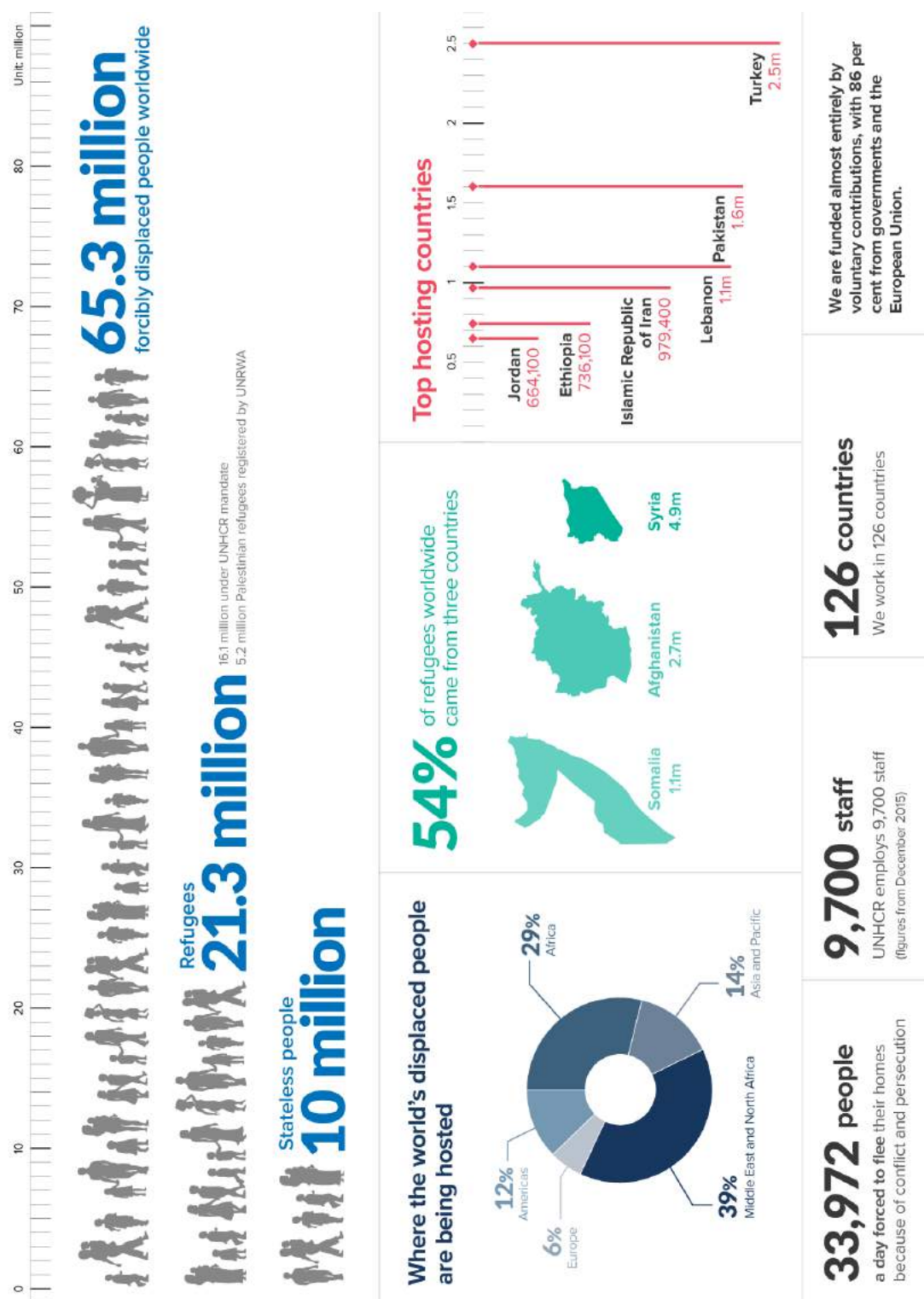
Support

Relationship Building

##### Company Culture

Source: Created by the Author

Figure 6: Figures at a Glance



Source: UNHCR (<http://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>)



Figure 7: RefugeesAidBCN Article Extract 1

## Refugees Aid Barcelona

[Expand](#)



Refugees Aid Barcelona is a 100 percent not-for-profit, grass-roots action group that gathers donations of goods citywide, sorts and packages them, and sends them directly to refugees all over the world. People to people.

On September 3rd, horrified by the viral images of three-year-old Aylan Kurdi and dismayed by on-going political apathy towards the growing plight of Syrian refugees, Barcelona residents Rita Rueff Lopes and Alberto Caio launched an SOS for immediate citizen action – from their living room.

Source: Metropolitan Barcelona; September 7, 2015

Figure 8: RefugeesAidBCN Article Extract 2

### Com es pot ajudar els refugiats?



Barcelona.(Redacció).- A través del projecte solidari [Refugees Aid Barcelona](#), nascut el passat 3 de setembre especialment per a la causa, es recull roba, mantes i objectes de primera necessitat per enviar-los als refugiats que arriben a Europa. La iniciativa ha aconseguit mobilitzar en poc temps centenars de persones a través de les [xarxes socials](#). Podeu consultar [aquí](#) els 15 punts de recollida que hi ha repartits per Barcelona.

Source: La Vanguardia; October 8, 2015

Figure 9: RefugeesAidBCN Article Extract 3

## **Refugees Aid Barcelona by Alberto Caio | Generosity**

### **THERE ARE NO BORDERS TO AN OPEN HEART**

*Help us send warm clothing and essentials to Syrian men, women and children in European refugee camps*



Source: Anon Galactic News

Wondering what you can do to help the global refugee crisis?

Source: INDIEGOGO; October 8, 2015